

LUFTWAFFE COLOURS



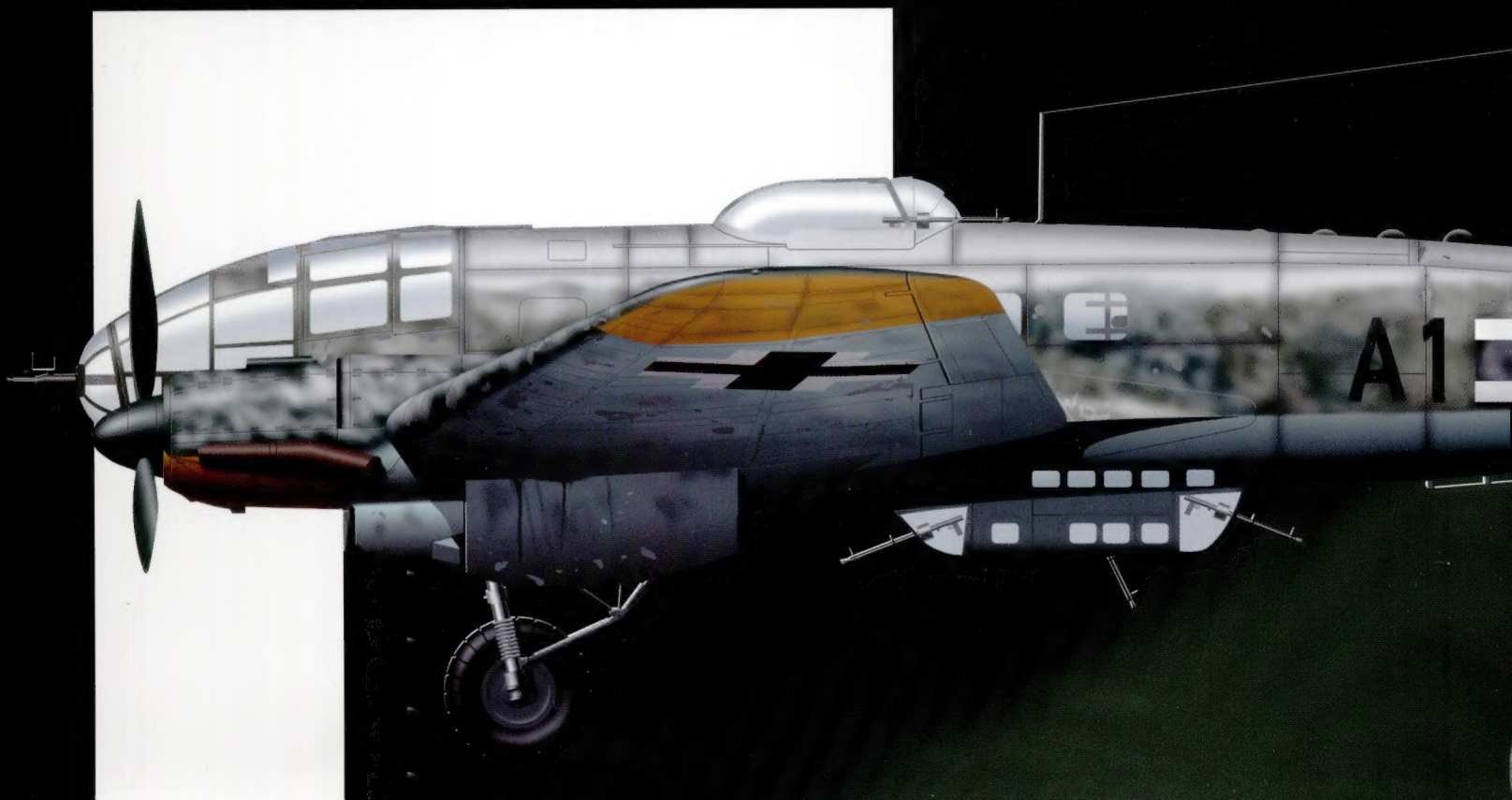
KAMPFFLIEGER

Volume Two

**J Richard Smith
& Eddie J Creek**

**BOMBERS OF
THE LUFTWAFFE**

**July 1940-
December 1941**



THE LUFTWAFFE BOMBER FORCE 1933-1945

'During the month of August (1940) nightly penetrations by the British Air Force into Reich territory had increased. For the first time since the beginning of the war, Berlin was attacked on 26th August. In view of the systematic attacks by Britain on non-military targets in the hinterland during the Western campaign, the Führer announced on 4th September that he intended the Luftwaffe to carry out counter measures.'

'Three days after this speech, on 7th September, the air war began on London, which was the target for the following weeks. For this the bomber units of Luftflotte 5 had been moved to the zone of Luftflotte 2. The C-in-C of the Luftwaffe had personally taken over command, as was announced in the war communiqué of 8th September.'

Lecture by Hptm. Otto Bechtle at Berlin-Gatow on 2 February 1944.



The Battle of Britain

"I was still unable to breathe properly when the men arrived to find me lying on my back. They lifted me to my feet and one of them thrust the muzzle of a gun into my face. I was still fighting for breath and quite unable to move, but looking beyond my captors I saw a car come up the road about 400 metres away and a policeman got out. As I was unable to move my arms I could not release my parachute harness, nor could I reach my pistol. Kicks and blows then rained down on me and I was struck with the butt of a gun. I fell to the ground, only to be lifted again and my watch and a ring on my finger forcibly removed. The policeman, now hurrying across the field, called in a loud voice and the men released me. Upon reaching us he lifted up my arms, enabling me to breathe, and asked if I spoke English and whether or not I was injured. I replied, 'Only a little' to both questions. Looking back I feel certain that my life was saved by that policeman."

*Karl Gerdsmeyer, Mechanic with 5./KG 55, taken prisoner near Bristol,
 25 September 1940*

Following the capitulation of France, the only country that stood in the way of Hitler's complete domination of Europe was the United Kingdom. The German offensive against the island began late in June 1940 with the appointment of the commander of KG 2, *Oberst Johannes Fink*, as *Kanalkampfführer*, whose task was to deny British shipping access to the English Channel. Apart from his own *Geschwader*, Fink also had under his command two *Stukagruppen* (II./St.G 1 and IV./LG 1) plus the fighter-bomber unit *Erprobungsgruppe 210*, with fighter protection provided by JG 51. He remembered:

"I took up command residence in an old bus on the French coast near Cap Gris Nez from where, through binoculars, I could clearly see the English coastline including the large radio tower masts as we thought them to be. Only later did we realise that these were to do with fighter control or radar."

On 4 July 1940 one of the first actions against a British convoy took place. Two *Staffeln* of Do 17 Zs from KG 2 escorted by 30 Bf 109s from JG 51 attempted to bomb about nine ships passing through the Straits of Dover. The only ship to be hit managed to beach itself near Deal but the RAF lost a Hurricane from 79 Squadron. Three days later 45 Dorniers from I. and II./KG 2 attacked another convoy near Dover, sinking one ship and damaging three others. A Do 17 Z from II./KG 2 was lost when it was shot up by a Spitfire from 64 Squadron and crash-landed near Boulogne. On 8 July Spitfires were able to intercept another Do 17 attack, forcing them to drop their bombs wide of the ships.

RIGHT: The port engine of this Do 17 Z of the *Geschwader Stab* of KG 3 is being run up during a maintenance check. The aircraft carries standard RLM 70 black green and RLM 71 dark green uppersurfaces with pale blue beneath. The unit badge - the arms of the city of Elbing where the unit was formed - is painted in red and white on both sides of the aircraft's nose. Note the open crew entry hatch.





LEFT: A formation of He 111 H-4s on their way to attack targets in the British Isles. This variant was structurally strengthened to enable a single 2,000 kg bomb to be carried.

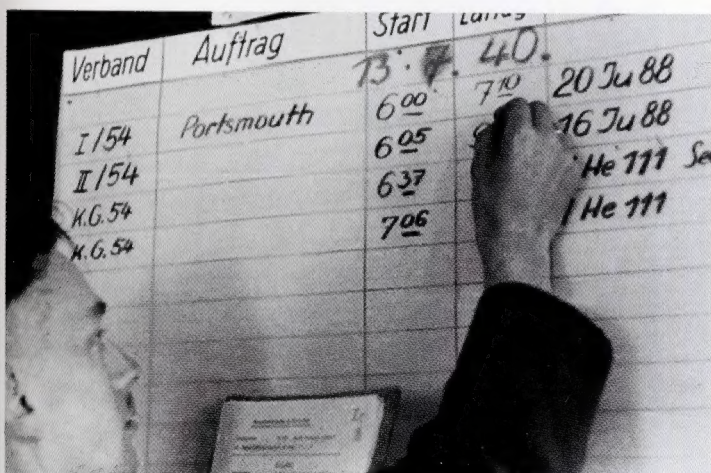
Early in the morning of 10 July, a large convoy which had left the Thames Estuary was intercepted by about 26 Dorniers from I./KG 2 with fighter escort around 13.30 hrs. The formation was then attacked by four RAF fighter squadrons resulting in a massive air battle. Five Do 17s were destroyed or damaged including that of the *Staffelkapitän* of 3./KG 2, *Hptm.* Krieger, who was taken prisoner. Due to the furious British fighter defence only one ship was hit. The next three days saw further attacks on convoys, the *Luftwaffe* losing three aircraft from I./KG 55 on the 11th and three from KG 53 on the 12th.

Although operations were sometimes hampered by bad weather, the whole of July was marked by continuous skirmishing between Fink's forces and the Hurricanes and Spitfires of the RAF. Because of this enemy activity, convoys heading for overseas ports soon ceased to use the Channel but coastal traffic continued to run the gauntlet until 8 August. On this day a convoy, designated CW 9 and comprising 20 merchant ships with nine naval vessels as escort, sailed from the Medway with the hope of passing the Straits of Dover in darkness. Near mid-Channel the convoy was intercepted by a large formation of dive-bombers with fighter escort and virtually annihilated. Only four ships managed to reach Swanage, seven were sunk and six more just managed to reach other ports in a critical condition. On the German side, 19 Ju 87s were destroyed or damaged. The attack resulted in severe restrictions being placed on further convoy movements in the Channel. One of the last major actions directed against shipping came on 11 August when no fewer than eight Do 17s (from a force of 45 drawn from KG 2) were severely damaged by RAF fighters in a strike against a

convoy in the English Channel. Between 1 July and 9 August 1940 the anti-shipping forces flew 1,300 sorties which represented 67 per cent of the total strike effort against Britain. During the same period several attacks had also been made on convoys off the east coast of Scotland by the He 111s of KG 26 and the Ju 88s of KG 30 based in Norway, both of which *Geschwader* often battled with RAF fighters.

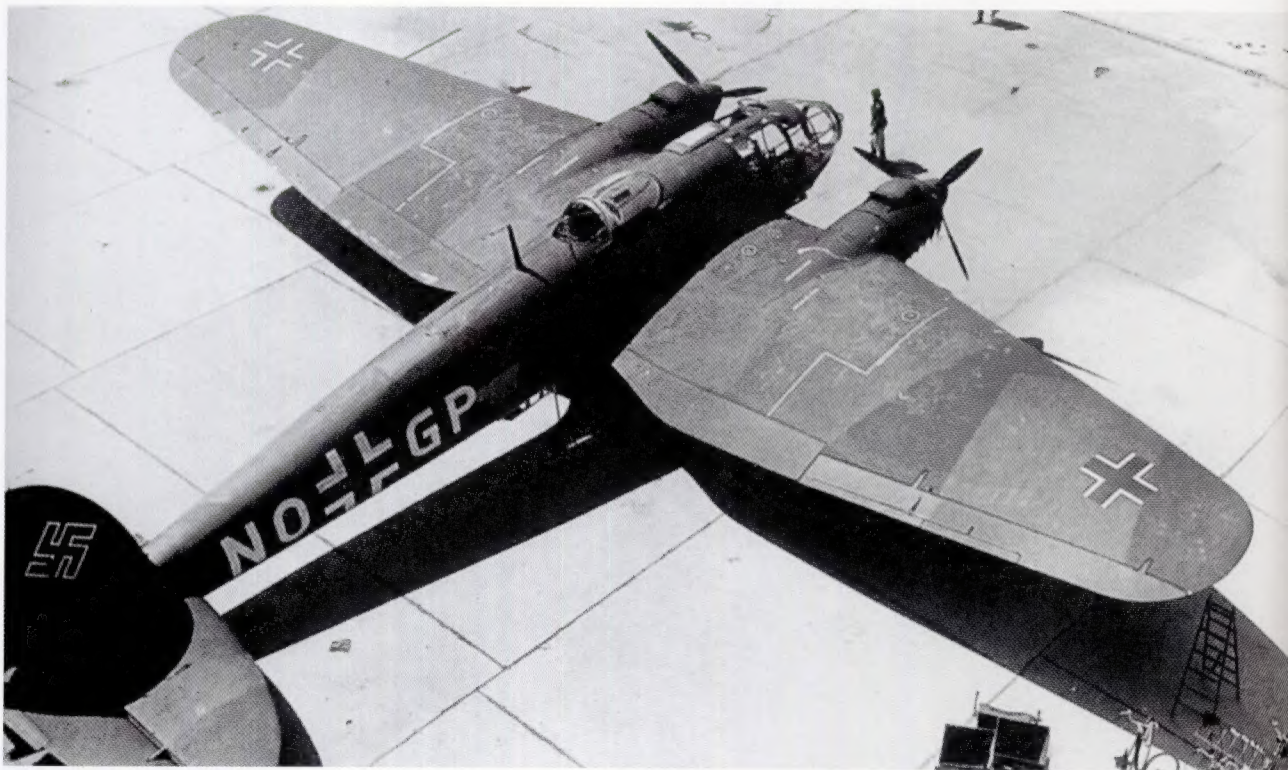
With the proposed invasion date becoming imminent, the major part of the *Luftwaffe* bomber force began to concentrate on attacking RAF airfields and radar stations. Hitler's thoughts on an invasion of Britain had been put forward as early as 16 July in his Directive No. 16 which

BELOW: A member of KG 54 completes his unit's attack indicator board for a mission flown on 13 July 1940 against Portsmouth. The top two rows of figures indicate the take-off and landing times for each Gruppe, while the next two rows indicate the take-off times for dinghy-carrying air-sea rescue He 111s which were allocated to pick up any crews that should be forced to ditch into the sea.



100 ● Kampfflieger July-October 1940

RIGHT: In this photograph of a factory-fresh He 111 P-4, W.Nr. 3105, the standard uppersurface camouflage pattern of black green (RLM 70) and dark green (RLM 71) is clearly visible. Heinkel-built aircraft often carried, as here, their Stammkennzeichen, or four letter radio call signs, in white.



stated: 'Since England, in spite of her hopeless military situation, shows no sign of being ready to come to an understanding, I have decided to prepare a landing operation against England, and if necessary, to carry it out.' Hitler's next directive, issued on 1 August, gave more details of how he wished the operation to begin: 'The Luftwaffe is to overpower the English Air Force with all the forces at its command, in the shortest possible time. The attacks are to be directed primarily against flying units, their ground installations, and their supply organisations, but also against the aircraft industry, including those manufacturing anti-aircraft equipment.' This action, known as *Adler Tag* (Eagle Day), was scheduled to begin on 13 August. It was to be the prelude for Operation 'Sea Lion', the invasion of the British Isles.

Problems had already begun to manifest themselves as early as the end of June. The *Luftwaffe* High Command had realised that its maps of the British Isles were far from current, and on the 27th it ordered systematic reconnaissance of RAF fighter airfields to begin in order that the target maps could be updated. These operations were not without interference, and on 1 July, for example, I. and II./KG 77 lost six Do 17 Zs to a combination of flak and RAF fighters while attempting to carry out these orders. The resulting losses were such that they began immediate conversion to the Ju 88.

During July 1940, 70 per cent of German bombing raids were directed against ports and shipping, most of the remaining attacks being carried out against strategic targets on the mainland. For example, on 18 July, four Do 17s from KGr 606 bombed the Rolls Royce factory in Glasgow, while three He 111s from KG 26 attacked Montrose. Also on this day the He 111 P with *Obstlt.* Bernhard Georgi, the *Geschwader Kommodore* of KG 27, on board, was shot down during an armed reconnaissance mission of the Bognor Regis area by a Hurricane of 145 Squadron. Georgi's place was taken by *Oberst* Gerhard Conrad.

The first major attack in preparation for *Adler Tag* came around 10.30 hrs on 11 August when 54 Ju 88s from I. and II./KG 54 with



LEFT: As the Luftwaffe became more heavily engaged with the RAF over Britain this sight became more and more common. After their He 111 P had been shot down by Hurricanes of 1 and 145 Squadrons 5 miles off Shoreham in Sussex on 19 July 1940, Fw Rudolf Kasten and Gefr. Arthur Mensel from 7./KG 55, attempted to paddle their inflatable dinghy across the English Channel back to the safety of France. This they failed to do and were captured, although contemporary German sources reported them missing.



LEFT: This He 111 from KG 55 limped back to France after suffering heavy damage from the machine guns of RAF fighters and crash-landed.

massive fighter escort crossed the Channel heading for the naval base at Portland. Many of the defending RAF Hurricanes and Spitfires engaged with the fighter escort, which allowed KG 54 to dive-bomb the port from 3,000 m (10,000 ft) and resulted in two large oil storage tanks being set on fire. A few Hurricanes from 213 Squadron managed to intercept and shot down five Ju 88s. Three of these, piloted by *Oblt.* Schott, *Oblt.* Welte and *Fw.* Basse, were from the II. Gruppe Stab. The first aircraft had as its navigator the *Gruppen Kommandeur*, Major Kurt Leonhardy, who was killed. Welte's aircraft, coded B3+DC, crash-landed at Portland where it was examined by RAF technicians two days later.

Next day the whole of KG 51, again with heavy fighter escort, headed across the Channel. The formation then split into two, the larger, comprising almost 70 Ju 88s, heavily bombing Portsmouth. The other formation made for the radar station at Ventnor on the Isle of Wight. In the ensuing action no fewer than ten Ju 88s were destroyed and three others damaged. Included among the former was 9K+AA which crashed on the Isle of Wight with the *Geschwader Kommodore*, *Oberst* Johann-Volkmar Fisser on board. Fisser was killed in the crash and the remainder of his crew was captured. His place was taken by Major Hans-Bruno Schulz-Heyn.

Before dawn on *Adler Tag* itself, 13 August, 74 Dornier 17s from Fink's KG 2 readied themselves to bomb the RAF fighter airfield at Eastchurch. Bad weather led Göring to order the postponement of the offensive for a few hours but this directive failed to reach KG 2's men. One of the pilots remembered:

"We took off in brilliant sunshine and at last set course across the sea. It was a magnificent sight to see our bomber Gruppen stepped up into the blue. There is no doubt that we felt very confident with high morale. We crossed the sea and encountered a little flak over Dover but saw no ships worth our attention so flew on inland towards the airfields of Biggin Hill and West Malling. We changed course

and then received the first warnings of fighter attack and became very alert. Another squadron came under fire as several Hurricanes zoomed through our formation, but we received no damage. I saw one Dornier smoking and gradually falling away. First blow to the enemy!"

In this attack KG 2 lost five Do 17s destroyed and seven damaged. A little later, Ju 88s from I. and II./KG 54 bombed the airfields at Odiham and Farnborough, but they too suffered at the hands of RAF fighters, losing four aircraft destroyed and 11 damaged.

BELOW: Not all German bombers were as badly damaged as this Do 17 Z of 8./KG 2 shot down on the mud flats of the Thames Estuary at Seasalter in Kent on 13 October 1940. The remains of the aircraft, which are being examined by British troops, originally carried the code U5+DS.



‘I still lived with the idea that death was sacrosanct...’

ERICH SOMMER (NAVIGATOR WITH *KAMPFGRUPPE 100*)

The night bombing of English targets began with our attack on Birmingham on 13 August 1940. It was a moonlit night, which was preferred at the beginning as we could control the accuracy of the beams which were laid over such targets of strategic importance such as aircraft factories, harbour installations and other clear military targets. No townships or civilian targets were our aim at this time. That came later, at the end of October, when we were ordered to attack the gasworks in the centre of Birmingham. We were told it was in retaliation for British aircraft having indiscriminately bombed civilian quarters in Hamburg, evidence of which I witnessed during weekend leave from Lüneburg when I stayed with my brother Helmuth.

In the weeks that followed during August and September, targets changed frequently all over the island until London was subjected to constant attack in October. Night flying became routine. The only thing to worry about was the take-off with heavy bomb and fuel loads and the return, with bad weather closing in. On more than one occasion we saw the still burning debris of an aircraft as we took off. The crews we buried in the local cemetery.

On one occasion I noticed an old French woman in the middle distance sneering from behind a tombstone in apparent delight that another couple of Germans had been killed. I remember this sending a shiver down my spine – I still lived with the idea that death was sacrosanct, a feeling I never lost through all the cruelty of war. Maybe I never grasped what war was all about, the destruction of your enemy by whatever means possible – the British perfected it without any apparent scruple. But I shouldn't forget what our own people did to our prisoners, Jews and political adversaries – now that I know of these atrocities which were concealed from us then. At that time I still remember having a feeling of compassion when confronted with a young English bomber crew. They had been brought in from a nearby airfield on which they had mistakenly landed their Wellington bomber, and stood there, disconsolate in their flying gear in front of our airfield headquarters.

We did not take part in the well-publicised attack on Coventry. We had taken off this night in a borrowed aircraft but this was full of faults. When all of our communication equipment failed, Horst, our pilot, decided to throw in the towel and return as bad weather was forecast for our time of anticipated return from the target. Of course, Coventry was a clear military target with essential war industry dispersed throughout the city. Each *Gruppe* was given a particular target within the area, but of course the whole city was involved. The important thing is to remember that a lot of special industry was put out of action for weeks.

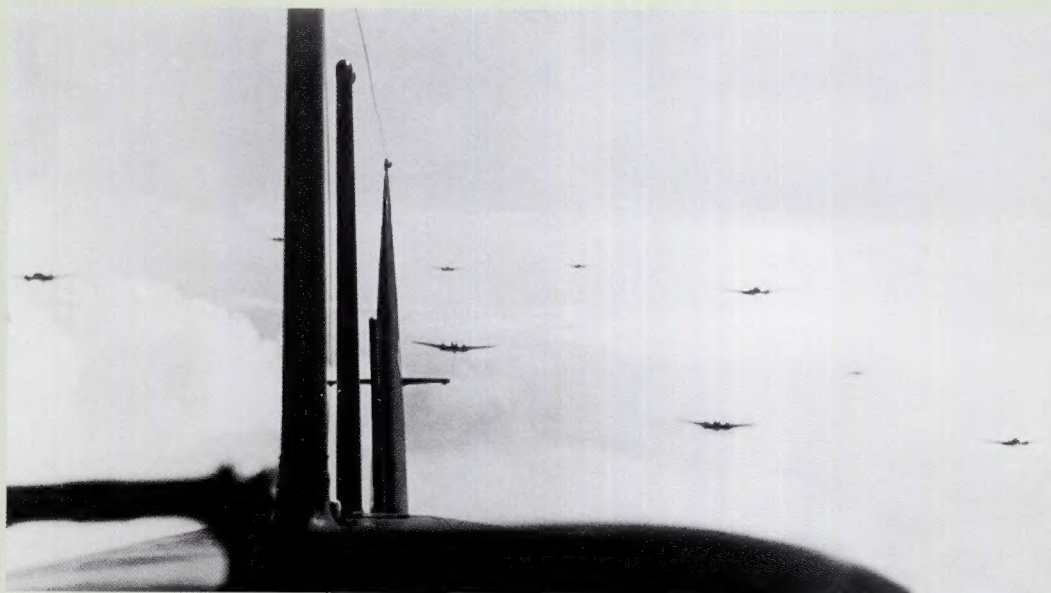
Our losses at this time were bearable. They came mostly from technical or maintenance failures. It was the novice crews that suffered most while us ‘old hares’ survived through experience and the wish to remain alive. Sometimes a seemingly cowardly expert is worth a lot more in the end than a reckless hothead. Although the hothead is often heralded as a hero after his death, his only achievement may have been as a memorial to inspire the indifferent. In the end it is the one with a little daring but a lot of prudence who can look back satisfactorily on some achievement.

We laughed off the enemy defences until our removal from this theatre in May 1941. Night fighters were reported and we were on the lookout for them, but only a couple of times did we catch a glimpse of them. The flak didn't worry us as it was mostly badly directed. We also desynchronised our engines to confuse the acoustic listening devices on the ground and, of course, we stayed above the height of the balloon barrages.

LEFT: A formation of He 111s of KGr 100 as seen from the dorsal gunner's position of another aircraft. Between 14 June 1940 and 11 July 1941 the Gruppe was commanded by Hptm. Kurt Aschenbrenner.



Erich Sommer (second from the left) with his crew photographed in front of one of KGr 100's Heinkel 111s. From left to right are Willi Sprickerhoff (engineer/gunner), Sommer, an unidentified naval officer, Horst Götz (pilot) and Gerd Albrecht (radio operator/gunner). The twin radio aerials above the fuselage of the He 111 were part of the X-Geräte pathfinding equipment.



Bombing operations continued, albeit on a reduced scale, on 14 August. The first attack was made by dive-bombers, but towards the early evening He 111s from KG 27, KG 53 and KG 55 carried out several raids on a broad front on various RAF airfields. Three Heinkels from the *Geschwader Stab* of KG 55 succeeded in bombing the hangars and offices of 609 Sqn. at Middle Wallop. Two Spitfires from the RAF unit managed to intercept the aircraft piloted by Oblt. Brossler and shot it down near Eastdene. This machine, coded G1+AA, had two important personalities aboard; *Oberst* Alois Stoeckl, the aircraft's navigator, who was also the *Geschwader Kommodore*, and *Oberst* Walter Frank, the *Luftgau* VIII Chief of Staff. Both men, as well as the pilot, were killed. Stoeckl was replaced by *Obstlt.* Hans Korte. Around the same time, KG 27 made for airfields in the south-west of England, the III. Gruppe losing five He 111 Ps to RAF fighters

Some of the most bitter fighting in what was to become known as the Battle of Britain took place on 15 August when *Luftflotten* 2 and 3 co-ordinated their attacks with those of *Luftflotte* 5 based in Norway and Denmark. Just after 10.00 hrs, 72 He 111s from I. and III./KG 26 took off from Stavanger/Sola to bomb RAF airfields in the north-east of England, in particular Dishforth and Usworth. Three RAF Squadrons were scrambled to intercept and in the furious fighting that followed, eight Heinkels were shot down. A little further south, about 50 unescorted Ju 88s from KG 30 based at Aalborg were heading for airfields in Yorkshire but were intercepted by two RAF squadrons. Seven aircraft were shot down and three heavily damaged. Following this debacle, *Luftflotte* 5 more or less abandoned such flank attacks. As the remnants of KG 30 returned to Denmark, KG 3 launched an attack with 88 Do 17s on airfields in northern Kent. Rochester, the target for I. and II./KG 3, was heavily bombed but the two *Gruppen* lost a total of two aircraft destroyed and six badly damaged, six of them from the 6. *Staffel*. Amongst those injured was the *Kommandeur* of I./KG 3, *Oberst* Freiherr von Wechmar. The final major attack of the day was launched by 60 Ju 88s of I. and II./LG 1 against the airfields of Middle Wallop and Worthy Down. Despite the presence of a strong Bf 110 escort provided by ZG 2, the bomber unit lost eight of its Ju 88s to the Hurricanes of 601 Sqn. including five from Hptm. Joachim Helbig's 4./LG 1.

During the day around 2,000 sorties had been flown by the *Luftwaffe*, with Fighter Command making 974. Although British claims of 183 German aircraft destroyed were considerably exaggerated, there is little doubt that for the *Luftwaffe* the actual loss of 76 aircraft was a severe reverse.

BELOW: The Battle of Britain proved to be the first campaign in which the *Luftwaffe's* *Kampfflieger* had taken part and in which their superiority was severely challenged. This He 111 H-3 of 3./KG 27 crash-landed in France after returning from a sortie over the British Isles during the summer of 1940. It carries the unit code 1G+BL with the badge of I./KG 27, a black winged sword on a white shield with the motto 'Geschwader Boelcke' painted beneath in Germanic script. At this time, I./KG 27 was led by Major Gerhard Ulbricht.

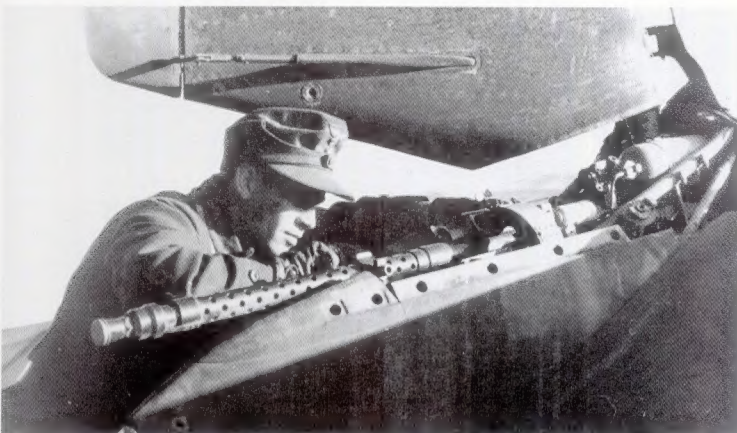


July-October 1940



LEFT: As the USAAF were later to do, Luftwaffe bombers flew in close formation during their missions in order that their guns could provide mutual defensive fire. Bomber commanders often attributed their losses to the fighter escort not being in close enough attendance but it was soon realised that even closer escort only restricted the fighters' activity and would not prevent bomber losses.

BELOW: In an attempt to improve Luftwaffe bomber armament, this He 111 was experimentally fitted with a 20 mm MG FF cannon in the upper gun position.



ABOVE: From the middle of 1940, the Luftwaffe began to encounter stronger fighter opposition in the shape of the RAF's Hurricanes and Spitfires. This resulted in the strengthening of the defensive armament of many German bombers. One method of achieving this involved mounting a 7.9 mm MG 17 machine gun in the tail cone of the He 111. (*BELOW:*) Mechanics filling the compressed air bottles for the machine gun. The aircraft's Werknummer, 7890, is painted at the base of the fin in white.



ABOVE: This He 111 P coded G1+HP of 6./KG 55, was brought down by RAF fighters on 18 August 1940 during a bombing raid on Heathrow aerodrome. It crashed at Anningtons Farm, Bramber at 5.15 pm. The crew Oblt. Wieland, Fw. Langstrof and Uffz. Appell baled out and were captured. Uffz. Hattendorf was killed and Uffz. Pulver was severely injured and died of his injuries the next day.



LEFT:
A Do 17 Z-2 seen just after returning from an operation over England. The badge possibly belonged to an unidentified Staffel of KG 2, a Geschwader which undertook a large number of operations in an attempt to deny the Channel to British shipping during the early phase of the Battle of Britain.

Nevertheless, *Luftwaffe* bombing attacks, at least by those units based in France and the Low Countries, continued the next day. The first raid was flown by two *Staffeln* of Do 17s from KG 2 against Hornchurch and West Malling airfields. The latter was put out of action for four days, but 3./KG 2 lost three aircraft destroyed. Shortly after 17.00 hrs a formation of He 111s from KG 55 crossed the coast near Brighton, again heading for RAF airfields. They were intercepted by two squadrons of Hurricanes and one of Spitfires, losing three He 111s destroyed and four damaged including one aircraft, coded G1+LM, which had the *Kapitän* of 4./KG 55, *Hptm.* Wladimir Sabler, on board.

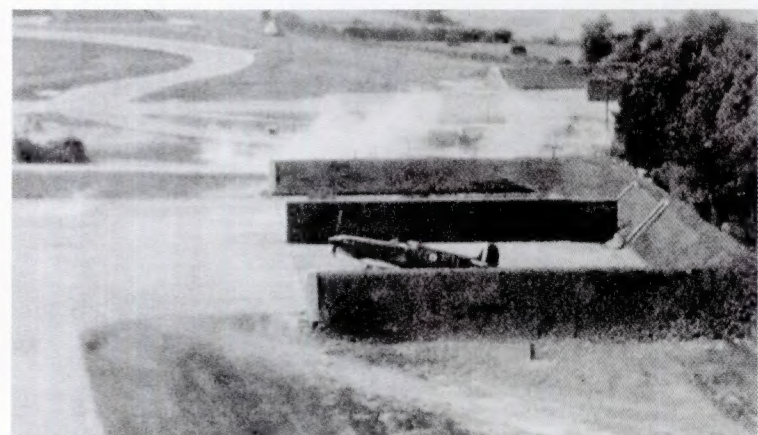
Although the *Luftwaffe* had by this time lost 286 aircraft against the RAF's 148, a far more serious problem to the British was the loss of 78 fighter pilots (around 10 per cent of the total) who were much more difficult to replace. It was quickly realised that the training units could not keep pace with such losses and pilots in other branches of the services with suitable flying experience were transferred to RAF Fighter Command.

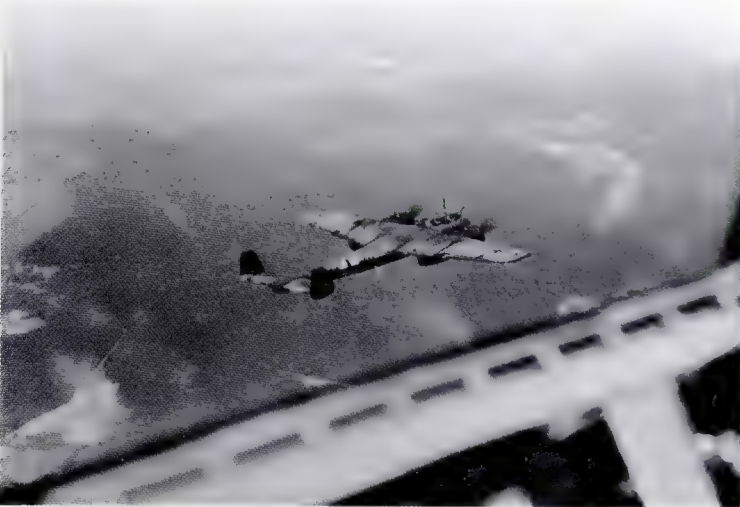
There was a lull in aerial activity on 17 August, but the next day saw a resurgence. Around 13.30 hrs the He 111s of I./KG 1, the Do 17s of KG 76 and the He 111s of II. and III./KG 27 attacked airfields in Kent including Biggin Hill and Kenley. KG 1 lost one of their number (V4+GK), but KG 76's casualty list was 18 aircraft destroyed or damaged, including no fewer than nine from the 9. *Staffel* which had attempted a low-level attack on Biggin Hill but had been met head-on by two RAF fighter squadrons. Amongst the unit's losses was the *Staffelkapitän*, *Hptm.* Roth (in F1+DT). In other operations during the day II./KG 53 lost its *Kommandeur*, Major Reinhold Tamm, with three other

BELOW: Another of von Pebal's photographs taken from a Do 17, during a raid on Kenley. A Spitfire of No 64 Squadron is clearly visible in its blast pen with smoke rising beyond, probably hits from machine gun fire.

BELOW: A Kette of three Do 17 Zs of KG 76

photographed by the German war correspondent Rolf von Pebal as they approach the white cliffs of Dover at around 13.00 hours on 18 August 1940. Shortly afterwards, the aircraft headed inland to bomb the RAF airfield at Kenley, where they caused considerable damage, destroying ten Hurricanes including six from 615 Squadron.





ABOVE: An extremely weathered Do 17 Z of 2./KG 76 photographed from another aircraft during the autumn of 1940. The individual letter of the unit's code, F1+KK, was carried above both wings, outboard of the Balkenkreuz. Shortly after this picture was taken 1./KG 76 began to re-equip with the Ju 88.

Heinkels from the *Geschwader* crashing in Essex or in the sea off the Essex coast. This time the *Luftwaffe* lost 67 aircraft during the day, although Britain claimed 153. This reverse led the *Kampfgeschwader Kommodoren* to demand that the fighter pilots provide the bombers with much closer escort. Contrary to the widespread belief that all fighters were to fly close escort to the bombers, Göring's response was, in fact, to order that *"Only part of the fighters are to be employed as direct escort to our bombers. The aim must be to employ the strongest possible fighter forces on freelance (i.e. freie Jagd) operations in which they can indirectly protect the bombers, and at the same time come to grips with the enemy fighters."* Unfortunately, many *Kommodoren* misinterpreted this instruction and understood it to mean that all fighters were to fly close escort.

Relatively few daylight operations were flown between 19 and 23 August due to bad weather, although two *Staffelkapitäne*, *Oblt.* Schwarz of 6./KG 3 and *Hptm.* Pfeiffer of 11./KG 53 were killed in raids on the 21st.

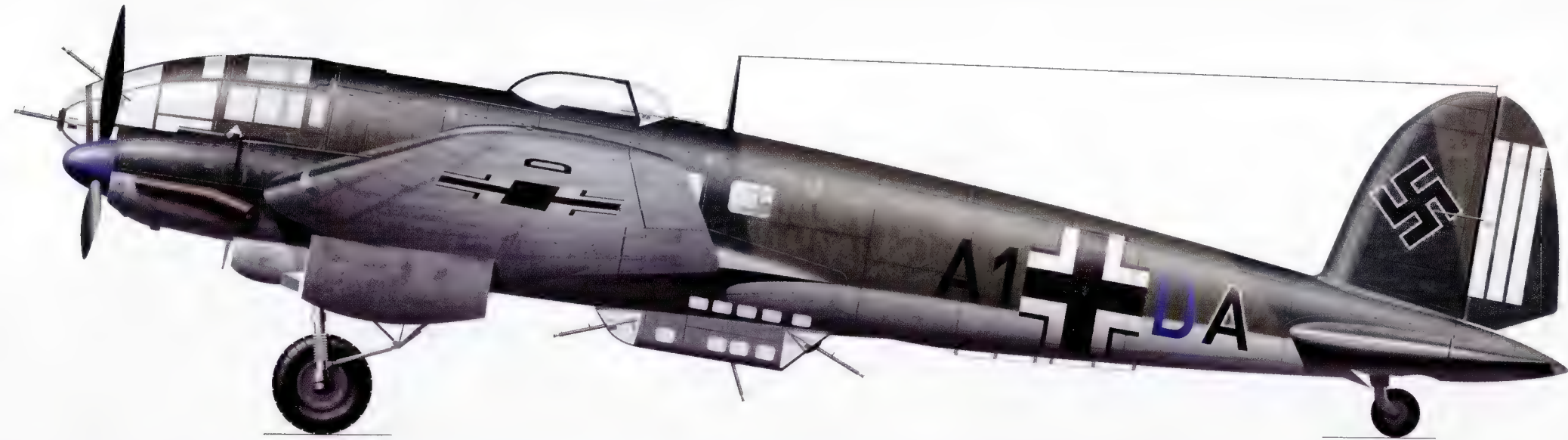
Dawn broke fine and clear on 24 August but the first actions just after 08.30 hrs proved inconclusive. Around noon, a large formation of Ju 88s from 11./KG 76 bombed Manston, causing considerable damage. Again this was not without cost as five Junkers from the *Gruppe* were shot down.

ABOVE: A dramatic scene as an injured crew member is helped from a Do 17 Z of 8./KG 76 and laid on a stretcher following combat over England. The aircraft carries the *Staffel* badge, three white Do 17s in silhouette superimposed over a silver bomb on a red shield. This particular aircraft has the name 'Delphin' (Dolphin) painted beneath the shield.



LEFT: This photograph of a Do 17 Z only serves to emphasise that nothing can be taken for granted when studying the subject of *Luftwaffe* camouflage and markings! This aircraft appears to have medium grey uppersurfaces, possibly applied for anti-ship use. The white painted front to the engine cowlings was also a most unusual practice. This experimental scheme appears to have been adopted later by the Do 217s of 11./KG 40.

RIGHT: An unusual feature of the aircraft operated by KG 53 was the painting of a white outline around the last Staffel letter of the unit code, as seen on this He 111 H-2. This aircraft A1+DA, carries three white vertical bars on the rudder, a common identification marking which was used during this period to identify the unit leader. Between August 1939 and December 1940, KG 53 was led by Oberst Erich Stahl.



Heinkel He 111 H-2 of *Geschwaderstab*/KG 53, August 1940

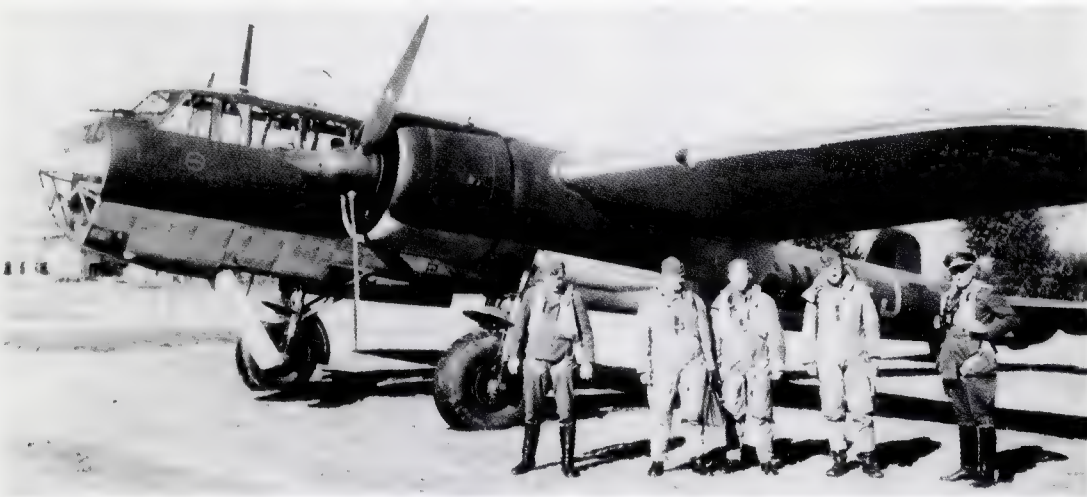
One of the most interesting features of this aircraft was the painting of three white vertical bars on the rudder, a tactical marking much used by *Stab* aircraft during the Battle of Britain. A feature of the aircraft of KG 53 was the painting of a white outline to the last letter of the unit code.

July-October 1940



LEFT: Most Luftwaffe bombers flew in formations made up of Ketten of three aircraft. This photograph, taken from another aircraft, shows an He 111 on route to its target.

RIGHT: A Ju 88 A-1 of 4./KG 76 showing the Staffel badge comprising a red gunsight superimposed over a white chicken. The latter is holding an umbrella which was a jibe at the British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, who was rarely seen without this accessory. The individual aircraft letter 'A' is painted in black outlined in white.



LEFT: Although the unit's main equipment was the He 111, a small number of Do 17 Zs were also delivered to KGr 100. This aircraft, 6N+JT, may have been flown by the Ergänzungskette which was formed on 24 August 1940, subsequently becoming the Ergänzungsstaffel on 1 May 1941 and 10.(Erg)/KG 100 on 29 November 1941.

These included the aircraft of the *Kommandeur*, Major Möricke, who was killed. He was replaced, a week later, by Major Walter Storp, who was to become one of the most famous *Luftwaffe* bomber pilots. Just after 16.00 hrs a heavy raid was mounted by III./KG 53 on the airfield at Hornchurch during which four Heinkels were lost. A more successful raid from the German viewpoint was made about the same time when Ju 88s from LG 1 dropped over two hundred 250 kg bombs on Portsmouth, severely damaging both the city and the naval base.

Towards midnight an event occurred which was to have a major effect on the outcome of the battle. Bombers scheduled to attack oil storage and other port facilities around Thameshaven accidentally hit central London, causing considerable damage. This led to the RAF bombing Berlin the following night and three more times before the end of the month. Infuriated by what he considered was an unprovoked assault, on 4 September Hitler declared, "When [the British] proclaim they will attack our cities in great strength, then we will wipe their cities out!"

For the moment, however, there was no immediate switch to the bombing of British cities and the assault on RAF airfields continued. Following some skirmishing on 25 August, the *Luftwaffe* made several raids on RAF airfields on the 26th. Around 13.00 hrs III./KG 3 bombed West Malling but lost four Do 17s destroyed and one damaged. Two hours later a major raid was flown against Debden and Hornchurch by about 40 Do 17s from I. and III./KG 2. Debden was heavily attacked by the leading bombers, but the arrival of RAF fighters prevented the main force from reaching Debden and resulted in the destruction of six Dorniers. These included the aircraft coded U5+GK, the crew of which included the *Kommandeur* of I./KG 2, Major Martin Gutzmann and the *Kapitän* of 3./KG 2, Oblt. Hermann Buchholz. The final attack of the day came at around 16.30 hrs when KG 55 attempted to bomb Portsmouth and Southampton, but with little success, five He 111s being shot down.

Relatively few operations were flown between 27 and 29 August, although the He 111 H-2 (V4+CD) with the *Kommandeur* of III./KG 1, Major Willibald Fanelsa, on board was shot down on the 27th and the crew taken prisoner. Fanelsa was replaced by *Hptm.* Heinz Fischer. On 30 August II./KG 1 launched an attack on the Royal Aircraft Establishment airfield at Farnborough but lost five He 111 H-2s. Uniquely, this unit carried the *Staffel* letters normally allocated to the fourth *Gruppe*. Therefore the five aircraft on this day were marked V4+BV, V4+GV, V4+HV, V4+MV and V4+DW.

The last day of August 1940 saw some increase in aerial activity. A formation of Do 17s from III./KG 2 heading for Duxford airfield was intercepted by Hurricanes over Colchester. Two aircraft, including U5+AD with the *Kommandeur*, Major Adolf Fuchs, on board were damaged. Fuchs was injured in the attack. II./KG 2 succeeded in reaching Duxford but part of the formation was attacked head-on by 111 Squadron and U5+CN shot down. Other Dorniers succeeded in dropping over a hundred 250 kg bombs and causing heavy damage. Around 13.30 hrs I. and II./KG 3 bombed the airfield at Hornchurch and lost four aircraft destroyed and five damaged. In a later attack on the airfield around 19.00 hrs, another Do 17 Z, F1+BK, was shot down.



ABOVE: Major Walter Storp was *Kommandeur* of KG 76 from August 1940 to September 1942 when he was transferred to the *Luftwaffe* *Führungstab*. He received the *Ritterkreuz* on 21 October 1940.

RIGHT: The remains of a Do 17 Z which struck the ground at a shallow angle, but with such force that it completely disintegrated. The Battle of Britain proved that the Dornier bomber gave a far from adequate performance and it was gradually replaced in service with the *Kampfflieger* by the Ju 88 and, later, the Do 217.



Luftwaffe Bomber Order of Battle 7 September 1940

Luftflotte 2		General der Flieger Albert Kesselring		Brussels	
I.Fliegerkorps		General der Flieger Ulrich Grauert		Beauvais	
Stab/KG 1	He 111 H-2 & H-3	Oberst Karl Angerstein	Rosières-en-Santerre	7	(5)
I. Gruppe/KG 1	He 111 H-3	Major Maier	Montdidier	36	(22)
II. Gruppe/KG 1	He 111 H-2	Obstlt. Benno Kosch	Montdidier	36	(23)
III. Gruppe/KG 1	Ju 88 A-1	Hptm. Heinz Fischer	Rosières-en-Santerre	9	(1)
Stab/KG 26	He 111 H-3 & H-4	Oberst Robert Fuchs	Beauvais	6	(3)
I. Gruppe/KG 26	He 111 H-3 & H-4	Major Hermann Busch	Beauvais	25	(7)
II. Gruppe/KG 26	He 111 H-3 & H-5	Major Eckhard Christian	Amiens	26	(7)
Stab/KG 30	Ju 88 A-1 & A-5	Obstlt. Herbert Rieckhoff	Eindhoven	1	(1)
I. Gruppe/KG 30	Ju 88 A-1 & A-5	Major Fritz Doench	Gilze-Rijen	10	(1)
II. Gruppe/KG 30	Ju 88 A-1 & A-5	Hptm. von Symonski	Chievres	30	(24)
Stab/KG 76	Do 17 Z-2 & Z-3	Obstlt. Stefan Fröhlich	Cormeilles-en-Vexin	6	(3)
I. Gruppe/KG 76	Do 17 Z-2 & Z-3	Hptm. Lindeiner	Beauvais-Tille	26	(19)
II. Gruppe/KG 76	Ju 88 A-1	Major Walter Storp	Creil	27	(21)
III. Gruppe/KG 76	Do 17 Z-2 & Z-3	Major Franz Reuss	Cormeilles-en-Vexin	24	(17)
Stab/KG 77	Ju 88 A-1	Obstlt. Johann Raitchel	Laon	1	(1)
I. Gruppe/KG 77	Ju 88 A-1	Major Balcke	Laon	36	(31)
II. Gruppe/KG 77	Ju 88 A-1 & A-5	Major Behrendt	Asch (Nord)	32	(25)
III. Gruppe/KG 77	Ju 88 A-1	Major Maxim Kless	Laon	30	(19)
I.Fliegerkorps		General der Flieger Bruno Loerzer Ghent			
Stab/KG 2	Do 17 Z-2 & Z-3	Obstlt. Johann Fink	St Léger	6	(6)
I. Gruppe/KG 2	Do 17 Z-2 & Z-3	Major Waldemar Lerche	Epinoy	19	(12)
II. Gruppe/KG 2	Do 17 Z-2 & Z-3	Obstlt. Paul Weitkus	St Léger	31	(20)
III. Gruppe/KG 2	Do 17 Z-2 & Z-3	Major Klaus Uebe	Cambrai-Süd	30	(20)
Stab/KG 3	Do 17 Z-3	Obstlt. Wolfgang von Chamier-Glisczinski	Le Culot	6	(9)
I. Gruppe/KG 3	Do 17 Z-2 & Z-3	Major Gabelmann	Le Culot	29	(25)
II. Gruppe/KG 3	Do 17 Z-2 & Z-3	Hptm. Pilger	Antwerp-Deurne	27	(23)
III. Gruppe/KG 3	Do 17 Z-2 & Z-3	Hptm. Rathmann	St. Trond	28	(19)
Stab/KG 53	He 111 H-2 & H-3	Oberst Erich Stahl	Lille-Nord	5	(3)
I. Gruppe/KG 53	He 111 H-2, 3 & 5	Major Erich Kaufmann	Vitry-en-Artois	23	(19)
II. Gruppe/KG 53	He 111 H-1 to H-3	Major Reinhold Tamm	Lille-Nord	29	(7)
III. Gruppe/KG 53	He 111 H-2 & H-3	Major Willi Rohrbacher	Lille-Mouvaux	19	(4)
9.Fliegerdivision (became IX Fliegerkorps on 16 Oct 1940)		Gen.Major Joachim Coeler		Soesterberg	
Stab/KG 4	He 111 P-4	Obstlt. Hans-Joachim Rath	Soesterberg	5	(5)
I. Gruppe/KG 4	He 111 P-4	Hptm. Meissner	Soesterberg	37	(16)
II. Gruppe/KG 4	He 111 P-4	Major Dr. Gottlieb Wolff	Eindhoven	37	(30)
III. Gruppe/KG 4	Ju 88 A-1	Hptm. Erich Bloedorn	Amsterdam/Schipol	30	(14)
Stab/KG 40	Ju 88 A-1	Obstlt. Geisse	Bordeaux-Merignac	2	(1)
KGr 126	He 111 H-4	Major Karl-Heinrich Schulz	Nantes	32	(31)
Luftflotte 3		General der Flieger Hugo Sperrle		Paris, St. Cloud	
IV.Fliegerkorps		Generalleutnant Kurt Pflugbeil		Beauvais	
Stab/LG 1	Ju 88 A-1	Oberst Alfred Bülowius	Orleans-Bricy	3	(3)
I. Gruppe/LG 1	Ju 88 A-1	Hptm. Wilhelm Kern	Orleans-Bricy	27	(13)
II. Gruppe/LG 1	Ju 88 A-1	Hptm. Heinz Cramer	Orleans-Bricy	31	(19)
III. Gruppe/LG 1	Ju 88 A-1 & A-5	Major Friedrich-Karl Knust	Chateaudun	30	(19)
Stab/KG 27	He 111 P-2	Oberst Gerhard Conrad	Tours	7	(4)
I. Gruppe/KG 27	He 111 P-2	Major Gerhard Ulbricht	Tours	35	(13)
II. Gruppe/KG 27	He 111 P-2	Hptm. Günzel ?	Dinard & Bourges	32	(15)

III. Gruppe/KG 27	He 111 P-2	Major Freiherr Speck von Sternberg	Rennes	7	(4)
I. Gruppe/KG 40	Fw 200 C-1 & C-2	Major Edgar Petersen	Bordeaux-Merignac	7	(4)
KGr 100	He 111 H-1 to H-3	Hptm. Kurt Aschenbrenner	Vannes	28	(7)
KGr 606	Do 17 Z-2 & Z-3	Major Joachim Hahn	Lannion	33	(29)
KGr 806	Ju 88 A-1	(unknown)	Nantes & Caen/Carpiquet	27	(18)

V.Fliegerkorps

Stab/KG 51	Ju 88 A-1	Oberst Hans Bruno Schulz Hein	Paris-Orly	1	(0)
I. Gruppe/KG 51	Ju 88 A-1	Hptm. von Greiff	Melun	33	(13)
II. Gruppe/KG 51	Ju 88 A-1	Major Winkler	Paris-Orly	34	(17)
III. Gruppe/KG 51	Ju 88 A-1 & A-5	Major Walter Marienfeld	Etampes	34	(27)
Stab/KG 54	Ju 88 A-1	Obstlt. Otto Höhne	Evreux	1	(-)
I. Gruppe/KG 54	Ju 88 A-1	Hptm. Jobst Heinrich von Heydebrock	Evreux	30	(18)
II. Gruppe/KG 54	Ju 88 A-1	Hptm. Hans Widmann (acting)	St Andre de l'Euie	26	(14)
Stab/KG 55	He 111 P-2	Obstlt. Hans Korte	Villacoublay	6	(6)
I. Gruppe/KG 55	He 111 H & P-2	Major Joachim Roeber	Dreux	27	(20)
II. Gruppe/KG 55	He 111 H & P-2	Major Friedrich Kless	Chartres	25	(20)
III. Gruppe/KG 55	He 111 H & P-2	Major Hans Schemmell	Villacoublay	25	(20)

General der Flieger Robert Ritter von Greim

Villacoublay

RIGHT: Three Ketten of Do 17 Zs fly over as crews ready other Dorniers for a mission. Between the two aircraft on the ground is the ubiquitous 'Tante Ju' (Auntie Junkers) or Ju 52/3m. This type of aircraft was widely used by the Luftwaffe to transport supplies and urgently needed equipment.



LEFT: KGr 806 was formed on 22 October 1939 at Dievenow from parts of the old 1./Kü.Fl.Gr 306 and 1. and 2./Kü.Fl.Gr 506. Its first Kommandeur was Obstlt. Wolfgang von Wild. Almost immediately after its formation it exchanged its He 60 and He 114 floatplanes for the He 111 J and subsequently converted to the Ju 88 A-4 in July 1940 at Ütersen. This photograph shows M7+CK of 2./KGr 806, its individual letter 'C' on the fuselage in red.

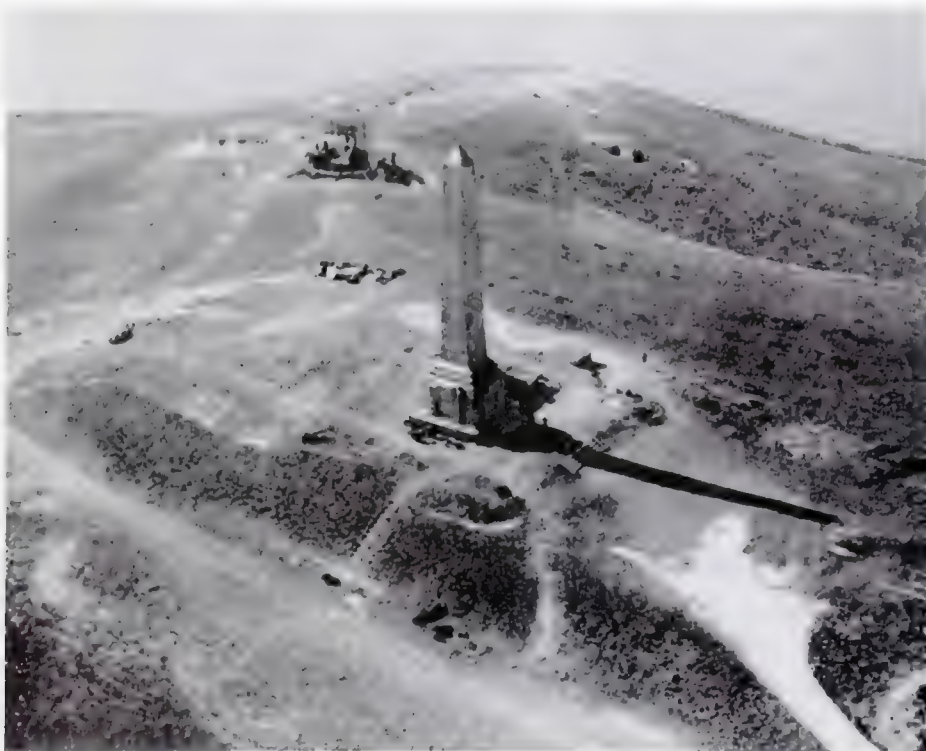
Skirmishing continued on the first six days of September 1940, but during the afternoon of the 7th Göring himself went to Cap Gris Nez to witness the departure of over 1,000 *Luftwaffe* aircraft as they set out on their first concentrated attack on London, their allocated targets being docks and oil refineries. No fewer than six bomber units, KG 1, 2, 3, 26, 53 and 76 were assembled for this change of tactics which was instigated in answer to the RAF's bombing of Berlin. These aircraft started fires which acted as a beacon for a follow-up attack that night. The huge numbers of *Luftwaffe* aircraft involved during the daylight attack with its massive fighter escort meant that only eight bombers, or 2.29 per cent of those taking part, were lost. Among the casualties were *Obstlt.* Benno Koch, *Kommandeur* of II./KG 1 who was injured, and *Hptm.* Otting, a *Staffelkapitän* in KG 3, who was killed.

This change in the *Luftwaffe*'s tactics was confirmed by an OKL (*Luftwaffe* High Command) order, issued on 9 September, which called for the systematic round-the-clock bombing of the British capital, but still not saturation attacks on London's residential districts. Despite the success of the operation on the 7th, the move away from the bombing of RAF airfields was a fundamental error which would lead to Germany eventually losing the battle. With the British fighters and their airfields no longer being directly targeted, Fighter Command was able to regroup and meet its adversary in ever increasing numbers.

BELOW:

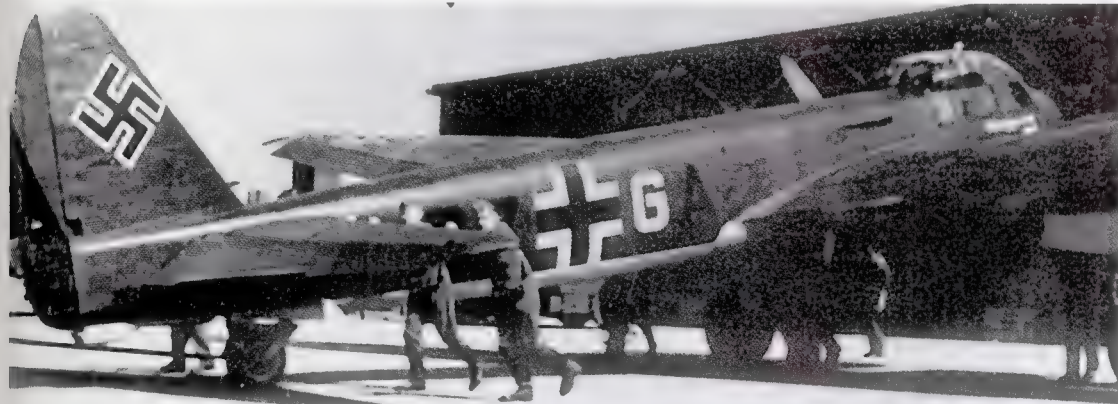
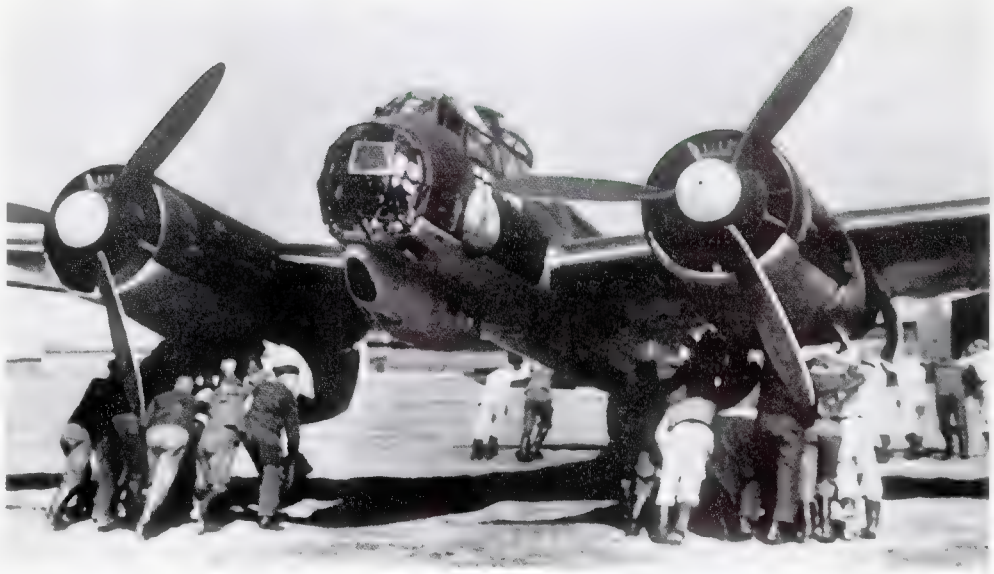
Cap Gris Nez near Wissant was often used as a vantage point by high ranking officials to observe the British Isles. Behind the monument can be seen a FuG Freya radar installation.

BELOW: On the afternoon of 7 September Göring visited Cap Gris Nez to witness the departure of 1,000 *Luftwaffe* aircraft on their way to attack London.



RIGHT: This He 111, which crashed in Britain following an attack by RAF fighters, is being examined by Army and civilian personnel. The aircraft's individual letter 'D' has been partly obscured by the temporary black paint.

THIS PAGE: The Wettererkundungstaffeln or meteorological squadrons performed an invaluable service for the Luftwaffe bomber force, providing it with important weather information prior to a sortie. This Ju 88, D7+GA, (BELOW) possibly from Wekusta 1, carries standard bomber camouflage and markings with the individual letter 'G' in white. The code 'D7' was allocated to several of the Wetterkundungstaffeln including Wekusta 1, 5, 6 and the Ob.d.L. The badge (BOTTOM) comprises a green 'weather frog' (as meteorologists were nicknamed within the Luftwaffe) on a pale blue background holding up a white shield with a red cross. The name 'Wolkenjäger' (Cloud Chaser) was painted below the cockpit.



The attacks on the London area carried out on 8 September were made in much smaller numbers when about 30 Do 17s from II. and III./KG 2 bombed airfields to the south of the city. Five RAF squadrons intercepted and three aircraft from 5./KG 2 were shot down. Next day KG 1, KG 30 and KG 53 each lost aircraft destroyed or damaged during an attack on the London docks. KG 30, the 'Adler' *Geschwader*, suffered particularly badly, losing five Ju 88s destroyed including the machine coded 4D+AD which had on board the *Kommandeur* of III./KG 30, *Major* Siegfried Hackbarth, who was killed. Relatively few sorties were flown on 10 September but, in an RAF bomber strike on Eindhoven airfield, eight He 111s from II./KG 4 were destroyed and two others damaged.

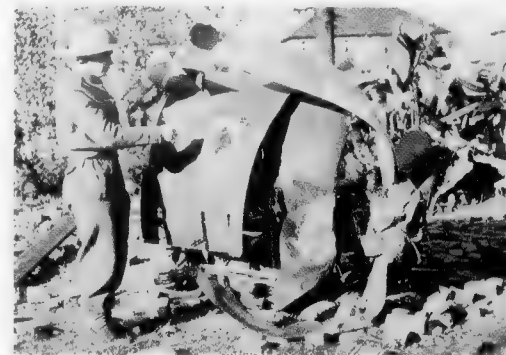
On 11 September I. and II./KG 26 made their way towards London, only to find that their fighter escort, from JG 51 and I.(Jagd)/LG 2, had been forced to break off early due to lack of fuel. As the Heinkels neared the city they were intercepted by no fewer than six squadrons of RAF fighters and seven aircraft were destroyed, including 1H+AH with the *Kapitän* of I./KG 26, *Hptm.* Künstler, on board, and a further ten damaged. The next three days saw relatively little action, although on the 14th, four Do 17s from KGr 606 all returned to Cherbourg-West airfield with varying degrees of damage. Two of these, 7T+FK and 7T+FN, were written off following combat with fighters.

What is generally agreed to be the climax of the battle came on 15 September, now annually celebrated in the United Kingdom as Battle of Britain Day. The first major action occurred just before noon when KG 76 was intercepted by no fewer than nine RAF squadrons, four of them attacking head-on. In spite of their fighter escort, this savage attack forced the bombers to scatter and in the ensuing mêlée six Do 17s were destroyed and two damaged. One of these, F1+FH, crashed on Victoria Station. Around two hours later about 150 more bombers, drawn from KG 2, KG 3, KG 26 and KG 53, with escort provided by JG 26 and JG 54, approached the city. This time the raid was met by around 170 Hurricanes and Spitfires over Kent, followed by at least another 130 fighter aircraft over East London. Reeling from the shock of being attacked by over 300 fighters, the bombers scattered, KG 2 losing eight aircraft destroyed, KG 3 losing six, KG 26 one and KG 53 six. In addition, many other aircraft were damaged, returning to base with their wings and tails shattered by RAF gunfire and often with dead and injured crew members on board. The final attack of the day was made on Portland by 27 He 111s from III./KG 55, but they were intercepted by Spitfires of 152 Squadron which destroyed one German aircraft and damaged another. The events of the day heralded the defeat of the *Luftwaffe*'s daylight offensive against Britain and led to any further thoughts of an invasion of the island – if, indeed, that had ever been the *Führer*'s intention – being abandoned, although all preparations remained in place so that, as far as Britain was concerned, the threat of invasion remained.

Luftwaffe operations during the next few days were severely curtailed as the shock of the 15 September action was absorbed, although nine Ju 88s from III./KG 77 were lost on the 18th, one of which was coded 3Z+ED. This had the *Kommandeur*, *Major* Max Kless, on board, who was killed and replaced by *Major* Handke. It was not until 27 September that the next major *Luftwaffe* bomber operation was flown, 55 Ju 88s from I. and II./KG 77 approaching London at around 10.00 hrs. Because it was late reaching its assembly point, the formation missed its fighter escort and was then attacked by about

120 Hurricanes and Spitfires who shot down 12 aircraft. These included 3Z+HN which had the *Kapitän* of 5./KG 77, *Hptm.* Zetsche, as navigator. During the day the *Luftwaffe* lost a total of 57 aircraft.

On 30 September II. and III./KG 30, accompanied by JG 27, reached the outskirts of London but although only two Ju 88s were shot down, their escort lost eight fighters. In the last attack of the day, I. and II./KG 55 lost four He 111s attempting to bomb the Westland factory at Yeovil. One of these, G1+JA, crashed into the sea but *Major* Ernst Kühl, who was later to become *Geschwader Kommodore*, was rescued, together with his crew.



ABOVE: The wreckage of a Do 17 Z of 8./KG 3 which was shot down over England during the Battle of Britain. A British soldier points to the Staffel's ace of spades badge painted on the outer surface of the engine cowling. The three Staffeln of III./KG 3 each used a playing card as their insignia, 7./KG 3 having an ace of clubs, 8./KG 3 an ace of spades and 9./KG 3 an ace of hearts. The choice of such emblems by III./KG 3 can be traced back to its original formation from III./KG 153 at Altenburg, the city being famous for the manufacture of playing cards.

BELOW: During the Battle of Britain, combat damage often resulted in many *Luftwaffe* bombers crash landing at their own or other friendly airfields in France or the Low Countries. After its undercarriage had collapsed, this He 111 slid backwards on its belly, smashing its starboard engine mounting and causing the damage to the propeller blades shown here.



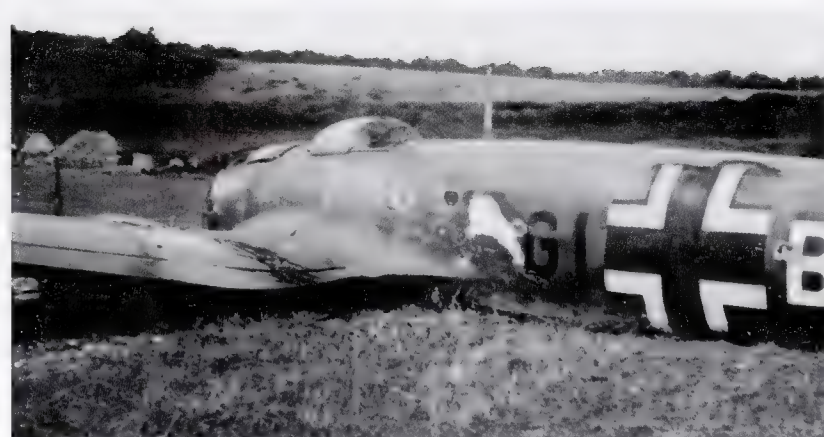


LEFT: During the Battle of Britain many Luftwaffe bomber aircraft had white vertical bars painted on top of their wings and on their rudder to easily identify their Gruppe when operating in close formation. These Ju 88 A-1s from I./KG 77 carried a single such bar in each position.

RIGHT: A standard early production Ju 88 A-5, possibly 3Z+DC of the Gruppe Stab of II./KG 77, under camouflage netting in France. The Gruppe, commanded by Major Behrendt, began to re-equip with the Junkers bomber in July 1940 following heavy losses suffered by its Do 17s. The individual letter 'D' is painted on the fuselage sides and beneath the wings in medium green (RLM 25) with the last letter, 'C', in black.

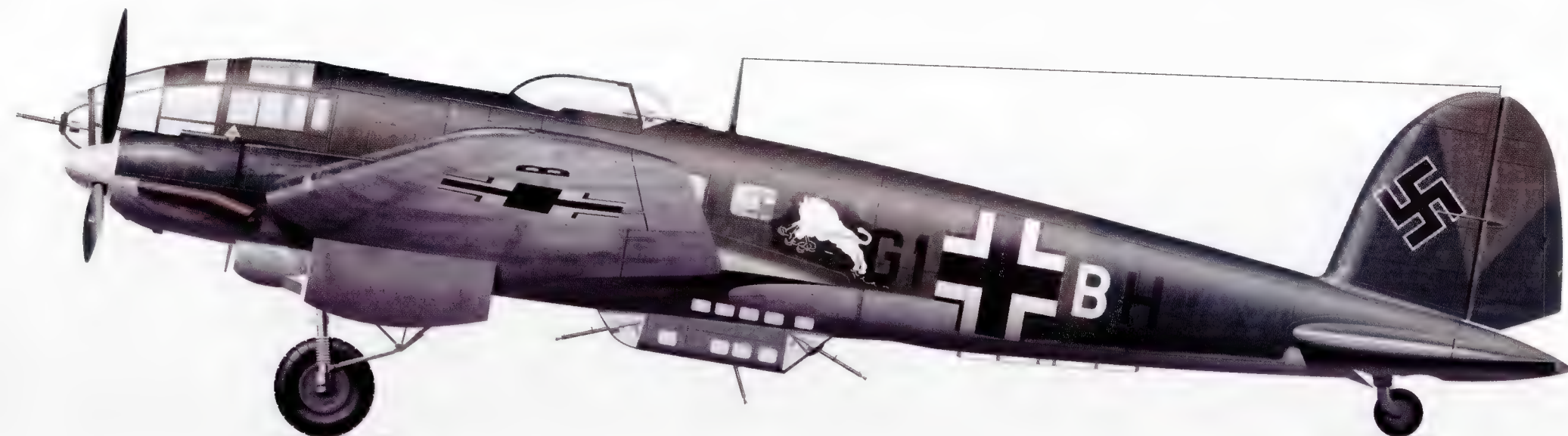


LEFT: Abandoned bicycles left behind by the crew of this Ju 88 A-4. The spinners are painted in three sections, red, white and black green.



ABOVE: Many He 111s belonging to KG 55 during 1940, carried individual emblems. In this instance a white 'prancing bull'.

ABOVE AND ABOVE RIGHT: This 1./KG 55 He 111 H was shot down by RAF fighters following an attack on the Bristol Aircraft Company's factory at Filton on 25 September 1940 and crashed at Westhill Farm, Studland, near Swanage in Dorset at midday. Of the crew of five, four, including the pilot, Fw. Fritz Jürges, and the navigator, Hptm. Karl Köthke, were taken prisoner. The flight engineer, Uffz. Josef Altrichter, was severely injured and later died. The aircraft, W.Nr. 6305, carried the code G1+BH with the individual aircraft letter in white. A large leaping bull, a personal insignia, was painted on the port side of the Heinkel, just forward of the letter 'G'.



Heinkel He 111 of 1./KG 55, 25 September 1940

Typical of a Luftwaffe bomber of the mid-Battle of Britain period, this aircraft was shot down at Westhill Farm, Studland near Swanage in Dorset by RAF fighters following an attack on the Bristol Aircraft Company's factory at Filton

BELOW: Although at first glance the person standing in front of this He 111, with his two Alsatian dogs, appears to be wearing a Luftwaffe uniform, a closer look shows he carries no insignia other than a cap badge. It is more likely that he was employed by the Heinkel company as a factory security guard.

The first week of October 1940 proved relatively quiet, although on 8 October II./KG 30 lost its Kommandeur, Hptm. von Symonski, in an accident and 6./KG 55 had one He 111 destroyed and two others damaged during an attempt to bomb Eastleigh. Just over a week later, on the 16th, von Symonski's replacement, Hptm. Erich Hass was killed when his Ju 88 A-5, 4D+DM, crashed near Bishop's Stortford.

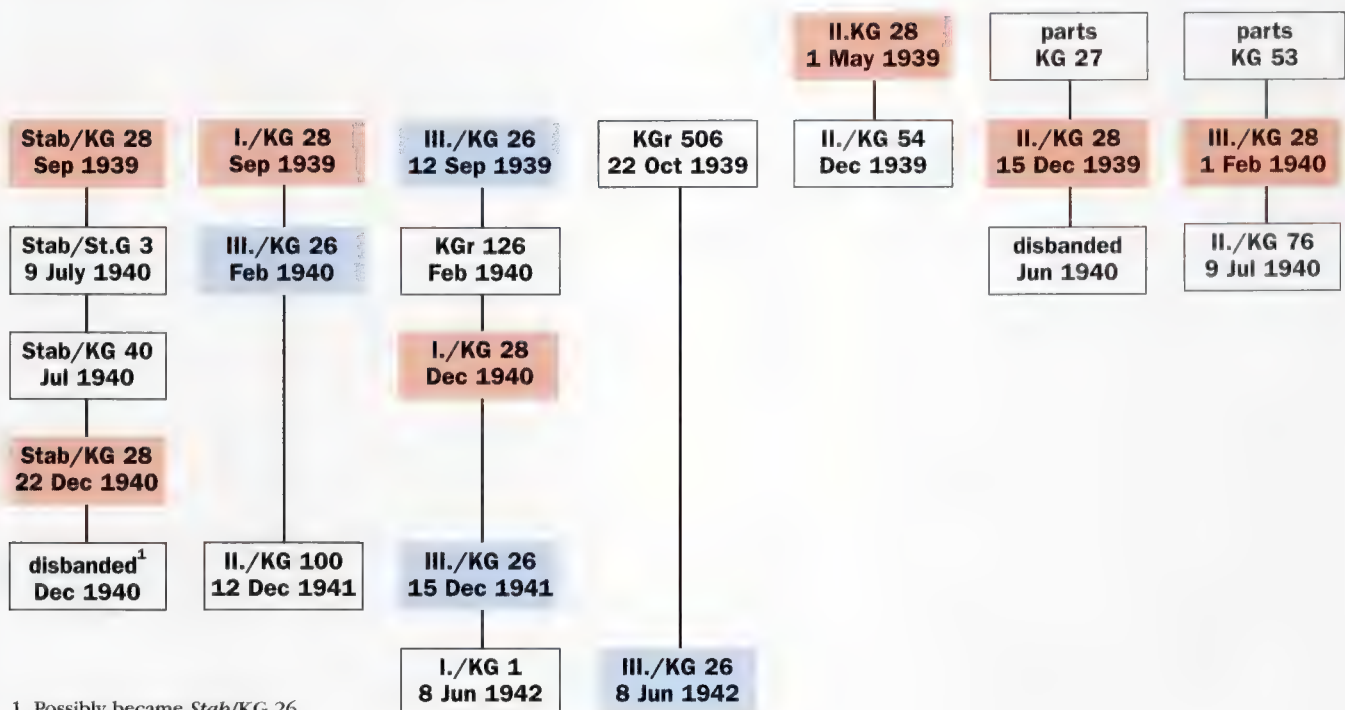
On 15 October, III./KG 30 was redesignated IV.(Erg)/KG 30 with a new III. Gruppe being formed from III./KG 4. One unit which also existed in Gruppe strength during 1939 and 1940 was the rather nebulous Geschwader, KG 28. As can be seen from the table below this unit was often linked with III./KG 26, of which no fewer than four different formations existed during 1940.

The highest German Air Force losses of the month occurred on 29 October when a total of 28 aircraft were shot down, but most of these were fighters or fighter-bombers and only four bombers were involved. The approach of winter with its worsening weather conditions, and mounting losses suffered during daylight, forced most bomber units to switch to night operations. The story of these sorties is told in the next chapter.

BELOW: Extensive use was made of captured equipment left behind by the RAF after evacuating France in May and June 1940. Here, a mobile crane is used to make a double engine change on an He 111 of KG 4. The Geschwader's badge, the family shield of General Wever, is painted in black and white on a red background behind the glazed canopy.



The History of Kampfgeschwader 28



July-October 1940

RIGHT: An He 111 P from KGr 100 flies low over the French countryside on its way to England. The aerial masts for the X-Verfahren, radio bomb aiming device are clearly visible.



BELOW: Luftwaffe mechanics in their familiar black overalls place a refuelling hose into the fuel tank filler point above the wing of an He 111. The red spinner was usually carried by aircraft of the second Gruppe.



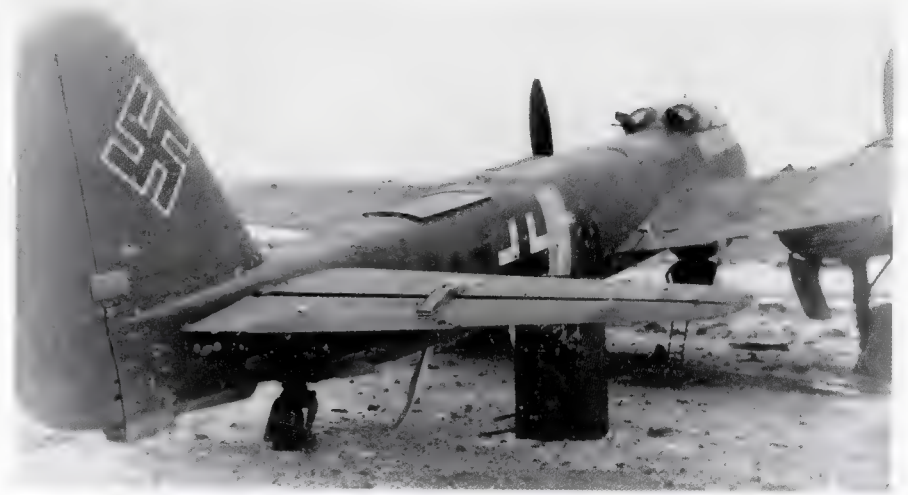
BELOW: Hydraulically operated bomb trolleys were rarely available to Luftwaffe ground crews during the Battle of Britain, and in this case, they were forced to resort to brute strength to haul the weapons aboard their aircraft.



BELOW: British troops examine a Ju 88 after it was shot down during the Battle of Britain. The aircraft has white spinners and a white individual letter.



RIGHT: KGr 806 began to replace its He 111 J-1s with Ju 88 A-1s following the end of the campaign against France and the Low Countries. This aircraft, M7+FH W.Nr. 4547, is shown after returning from a sortie during the Battle of Britain with considerable damage caused by RAF machine guns. The yellow bar beneath the white individual letter is unusual, but its significance is unknown.



Junkers Ju 88 A-5 of 1./KGr 806, August 1940

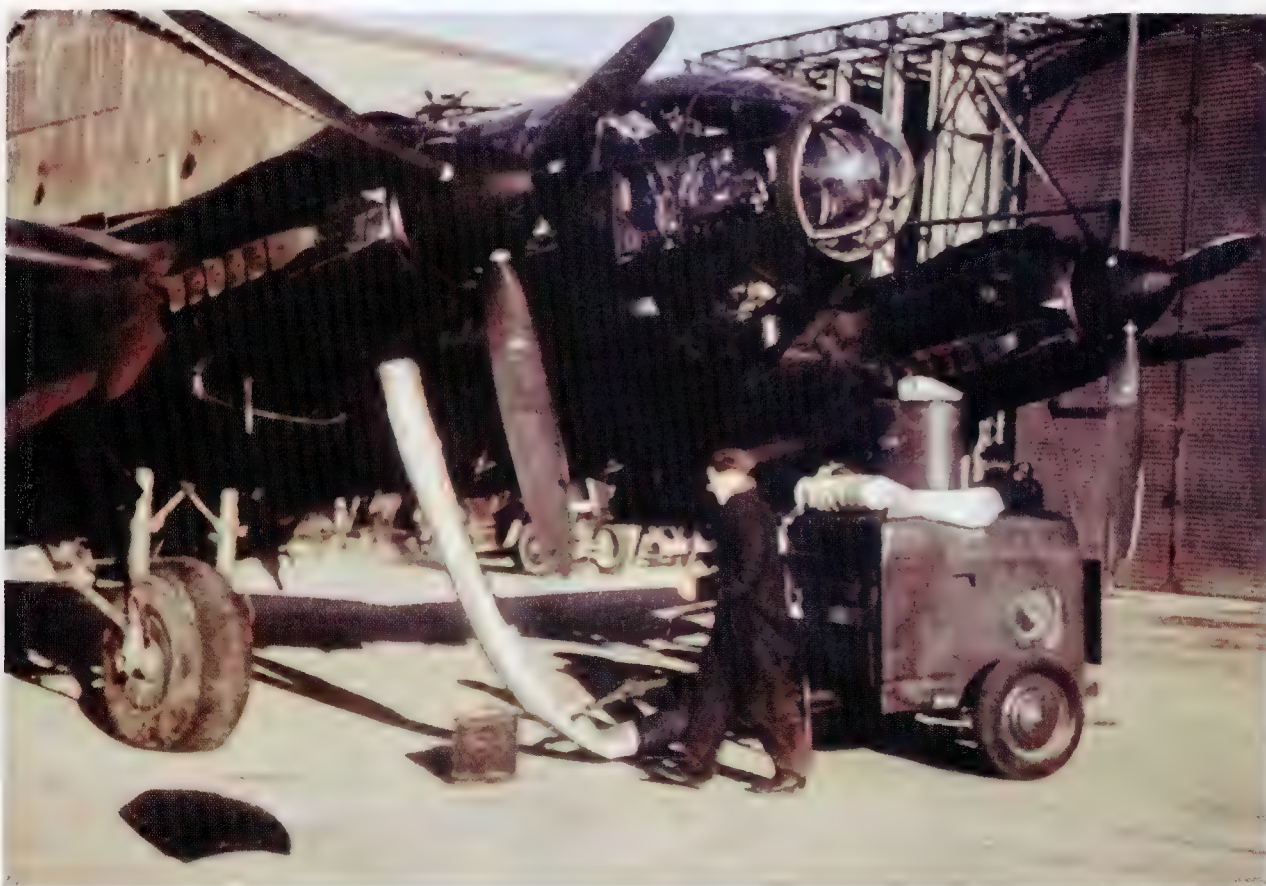
It is thought that the yellow vertical bar painted on the fuselage side might have been a special tactical marking. The Werk Nummer 4547 would indicate that the aircraft was built under licence by the Dornier Süd factory.

July-October 1940



LEFT: A Staffel, made up of three Ketten of three He 111 H-4s, on their way to attack targets in the British Isles. This view shows to advantage the Heinkel's elliptical wing.

BELOW: This close-up of the nose of an He 111 H-10 clearly shows the hand-held 20 mm MG FF cannon and the ridged lines of the balloon cable cutting device which formed part of the canopy frame. Early experiments with a special outrigger structure for cutting balloon cables proved too cumbersome and the device was replaced by that seen here



LEFT: Luftwaffe bombers began to adopt temporary black paint for night operations as early as September 1940. Here a mechanic uses a portable heater to help start the engines of this He 111 prior to a nocturnal sortie.

The Blitz – Night Bombing Operations September 1940-December 1941

"The anti-aircraft fire was not bothering us as yet; it certainly was not as furious as the German flak which, it is popularly believed, induces the English airmen to partake of alcoholic drinks – dying is supposed to be easier that way. These night raids are quite a problem and no one should be blamed for not always hitting military targets in darkness. That is no reason to deny a man the attribute of military courage! We, too, are only too glad to get rid of our bombs. We must not dwell upon or worry about who is being killed by them. And nor do we worry. The first time, in Harstadt in Norway, I still had such worries, but never again since. On second thoughts, yes, over Bödo I also had such feelings. That attack, against an open city, had not been to my taste. But we were flying against England now. During the turn our aircraft had appeared to slip away rather badly. The auto-pilot had ceased to work and the master compass failed. We could have been anywhere in the darkness of that night, wandering around and looking at the direct-reading compass now and then. If only the damned water beneath us had not been there!"

*Paul Wiersbitski, a pilot with 2./KGr 100, on the Gruppe's first night attack,
13 August 1940*

From a contemporary interview.

BELOW: A Luftwaffe bomber crew discuss their experiences with two Italian officers during the height of the Blitz. The Do 17 Z in the background carries the familiar diagonal white stripe of KG 2 forward of the cockpit while aft of the wing can be seen the blacked-out national insignia and identity markings.

Although there had been a night attack on Bristol docks on 11 August 1940, when II./KG 27 lost its Kommandeur, Major Joachim Schlichting, and KGr 100 had flown its first nocturnal attack two nights later, when the target was the Dunlop rubber factory near Birmingham, the Luftwaffe's first major night bombing raid against the British Isles was not carried out until 28 August. On this occasion a total of 340 bombers took off for targets in England, the main attack being carried out against Liverpool by 160 aircraft drawn from LG 1, KG 27, I./KG 40, KG 51, KG 55 and KGr 806. Of these only 95 succeeded in reaching

the target, several being diverted due to misunderstandings. At the same time KGr 100 and KGr 606 attacked the Gloster Aircraft Company factory at Hucclecote but, despite relatively little successes being achieved in both raids, only one aircraft was lost, a Ju 88 A-1 of KGr 806. Three further attacks on Liverpool followed on successive nights, the most destructive of these on 29 August when 137 aircraft from the previously mentioned units, now joined by KGr 100 and KGr 606, dropped a total of 132 tonnes (130 tons) of high explosive bombs and 313 incendiary canisters.

The 'Blitz' ¹ proper began on the night of 7 September 1940. As has been recorded in the previous chapter, the first bombs fell on central London on the night of 24/25 August, but in error. Despite this, the British saw this as an escalation of the air war,



LEFT: A battered and drably painted Do 17 Z lifts off from its home airfield en route for another operation against the British Isles. Note the carefully camouflaged dispersal points which suggests that RAF intruder flights had already begun to make themselves felt.

and in fact may have used it as an excuse to bomb Berlin, which they knew would probably in turn result in Hitler diverting his attacks from RAF airfields to British cities. If this was the intention it was successful, though only after a succession of British raids on Berlin, aimed specifically at the city's civilian population. When his patience was exhausted, Hitler became infuriated and ordered that the "night piracy of the British" be countered by a concentrated night offensive against the island, and especially London.

On the night of 7 September, 318 bombers from the whole of KG 53 supported by eight other *Kampfgruppen*, flew almost continuous sorties against London, the dock area of which was already in flames from earlier daylight attacks. By midnight firemen were dealing with nine major conflagrations, one of which, in the Quebec Yard of the Surrey Docks, was later recognised as the greatest single fire ever recorded in Britain. Apart from the material devastation, 306 people were killed and 1,337 seriously injured.

From then until 13 November 1940, the *Luftwaffe* bomber force mounted attacks on London on consecutive nights, the heaviest raid coming on 15 October when 410 aircraft dropped 540 tonnes of high explosive bombs and 177 incendiary canisters against targets in the dock area and on rail termini. Many of these raids were led by the He 111s of KGr 100 using the *X-Verfahren* (X-system) radio bomb aiming device. Unlike the later operations by the RAF's pathfinder force, the aircraft of KGr 100 carried mainly incendiary bombs rather than specialised flares or target markers, as a result of which the *Gruppe* was often known as the *Anzünder*, or Fire-Lighting *Gruppe*.

By this time it was becoming obvious to Germany that the attempt to bring the war to an early end by destroying British morale through the continued nightly bombing of London was not succeeding. First of all, the citizens of London refused to be cowed by what they incorrectly perceived as the deliberate targeting of their homes. Furthermore, the city itself covered such a great area that the destruction of significant areas could not, in any case, be achieved with the bomber forces then available. This led Germany to change tactics again and direct its bombing against Britain's industrial and economic power base. The first raid of the new offensive came on 14 November when about 450 bombers targeted the Midland city of Coventry under the codename '*Mondscheinserenade*' (Moonlight Serenade). Coventry had a large number of aircraft and motor manufacturing plants and these formed the main objective for the raid. The first He 111s from KGr 100 arrived over the city at 19.20 hrs and within an hour it was a sea of flames. Early in the attack telecommunications failed and both gas and water mains were severely damaged, adding to the fires and hampering the emergency services. During the night, the *Luftwaffe* released 500 tonnes of bombs over the city and succeeded in severely damaging 21 factories and interrupting important war production for a period of some weeks. Unfortunately, because the targets were situated in residential areas, 554 people were killed, 865 severely injured and the magnificent medieval cathedral gutted. Only one aircraft was lost, and this to anti-aircraft fire. So significant was the raid that German propaganda coined a new word to describe the wholesale destruction of cities, *zu Coventrieren* – "to Coventrate".

On the next three nights German bombers returned to London, with a secondary attack on Southampton on the 17th, followed by three successive raids on Birmingham which again caused severe damage. During one of these raids, on 20 November, a Beaufighter of 604 Squadron recorded the first British night fighter success when it shot down a Ju 88 of 3./KG 54 piloted by *Uffz.* Kaspar Sondermeister near Oxford. The remainder of the month saw raids on Bristol, Southampton, Plymouth, Liverpool and London.

In addition to KGr 100, III./KG 26 also flew 'fire-lighting' raids using the *Y-Verfahren* (Y-system) which essentially comprised a ground station emitting signals which were re-radiated by the bomber. The time taken for these signals to return to the ground station enabled a German controller to calculate the exact range of the bomber along a bearing determined by an auxiliary direction-finding system. He could then direct the bomber towards the target, making any necessary corrections to its course.

BELOW: As nocturnal operations by the Kampfflieger grew, it became increasingly common for their aircraft to adopt temporary black paint finishes. This He 111 P-4 of 3./KG 55, carries the code G1+ML with the camouflage paint obscuring the white areas of the fuselage Balkenkreuz, but not the Hakenkreuz. The yellow (RLM 27) individual aircraft letter 'M' has also been partly obscured.



'My last flight against England'

GEORGE SEUSS (RADIO OPERATOR WITH 3./KG 54)

At 14.00 hrs on 19 November 1940 we received a briefing for a flight against England. We were to attack Birmingham and the altitude and return course was plotted so that it would avoid any danger of us colliding with incoming aircraft. We took off at about 23.30 hrs, and flew as we always did. Dark night, clear starry sky, nothing special happening. Searchlights sought to catch our aircraft in their beams of light, attempting to show the flak its target. Our aircraft were painted black underneath which made them difficult to see from the ground.

About 10 minutes before reaching the target we heard a crashing and crackling in the aircraft. It must have been a night fighter attack because we saw no searchlight beam. Franz Sondermeister, our pilot, immediately pushed our aircraft into a dive in which we dropped from 6,000m (19,000 ft) to 3,000m. Then the starboard engine packed up. Despite being on full power from the port engine we couldn't maintain height and kept losing altitude. The pilot asked how far it was to France or Ireland. I always had a map ready with the course that we'd flown marked on it. Franz said he'd head for France because both distances were the same.

Then Franz said we could no longer reach the French coast since we weren't high enough. I set the radio to the emergency frequency with the idea of sending an SOS and our call sign as soon as we crossed the English coast. Suddenly, a searchlight beam appeared from behind, and then another night fighter, but this aircraft veered off. He hadn't seen us. Then we saw yet another night fighter approaching us head on, operating without the aid of searchlights. He opened fire and set our port engine alight.

'Our pilot shouted: "is anyone hurt?"

There was no answer because the intercom was no longer working.

Then he shouted: "Bale out!"

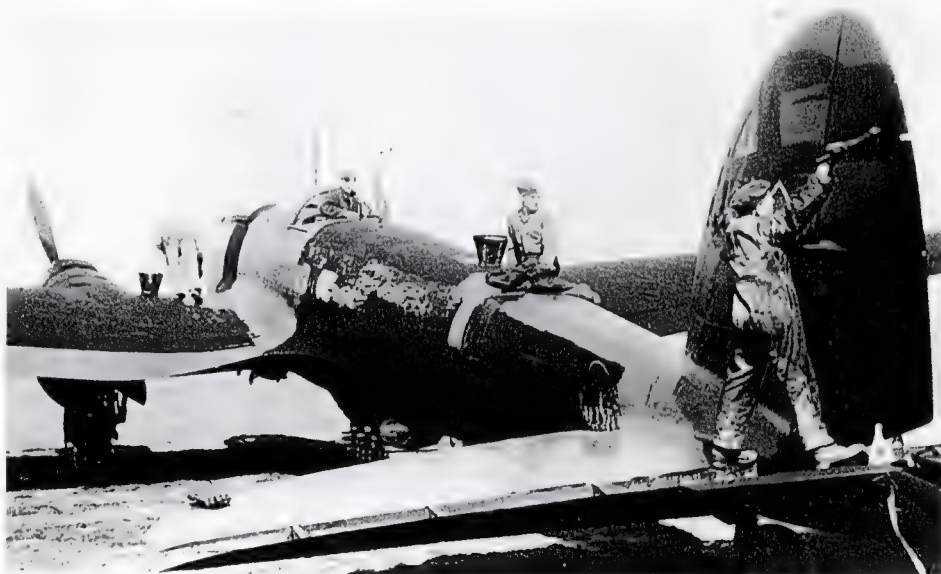
I pulled down on the safety peg and immediately the aft part of the canopy disappeared and our exit was clear. I quickly checked the handle of the parachute ripcord: it was still in the holder. Putting my feet out, I let myself slide over the wing. After a few seconds I pulled the ripcord and after a small jerk I was left hanging from the parachute. My freedom as a soldier was over.'

NOTE: Seuss was flying in a Ju 88 A-1 coded B3+VL, W.Nr. 2189, which was shot down near Chichester by F/L Cunningham and Sgt. Phillipson of 604 Squadron on 20 November 1940. This was the first kill by a Beaufighter equipped with A.I. Mk.IV airborne radar. Of the other members of the crew, the pilot Uffz. Kaspar 'Franz' Sondermeister was also taken prisoner but the navigator, Uffz. Heinrich Liebermann and the gunner, Flieger Peter Mey, were both killed. It was Liebermann's first operational sortie.



ABOVE: Ground crew struggle to manoeuvre a Ju 88 of 4./KG 54 coded B3+IM probably at St. André during the early summer of 1941. Although this aircraft belonged to the 4. Staffel of the Geschwader, it would have been similar to that, B3+VL, in which Georg Seuss was shot down on 20 November 1940.

RIGHT: As early as July 1940 temporary black lacquer (RLM 7120.22) was scheduled for use by Luftwaffe bombers flying regular night bombing attacks on the British Isles. The instruction describing this temporary finish ordered that it be applied with large ceiling brushes, in strokes running parallel to the line of flight, to all undersurfaces finished in pale blue (RLM 65). Wings and horizontal tail surfaces were to have the 7120.22 taken over the uppersurfaces to a point half a metre past the leading edge. The sides of the fuselage were to be painted up to a point level with the top of the Balkenkreuz. This photograph gives an excellent idea of how ground staff applied this finish to their aircraft, in this case an He 111 H-6 of KG 26 (W.Nr. 3762).



Despite these direction-finding aids, *Luftwaffe* bomber sorties had to be severely curtailed during December 1940 because of rain, snow, fog, ice and thick cloud, and on 15 nights of the month, virtually no raids were flown. Nevertheless, it was possible to mount a major attack by 413 aircraft on London on the 8th; on the 12th, 278 bombers raided Birmingham; 336 aircraft attacked Sheffield the next day; and on the 21st, Liverpool was attacked by 294 aircraft. Much to the annoyance of the British Foreign Office, which had made preparations to exploit *Luftwaffe* bombing during the Christmas period for its propaganda value, Hitler suspended all such missions against Britain from 24 to 26 December, so that the final raid of the year was carried out on 29 December when 136 bombers, led by ten Heinkels from KGr 100, bombed targets in London.



ABOVE: This photograph of an He 111 in flight shows how the temporary black paint appeared after application. Only the aircraft's individual letter 'E' remains visible as a plain white outline.

At the beginning of the New Year, the number of long-range bombers on the strength of *Luftflotten* 2 and 3 stood at 1,214 aircraft, just slightly fewer than at the height of the Battle of Britain in September 1940. However, serviceability was suffering due to the intensity of the night offensive, the two *Luftflotten* mustering only some 551 aircraft on 4 January 1941. Throughout the first two months of 1941 bad weather continued to curtail operations. German sources reported that seven major raids (those in which over 100 tonnes of bombs were dropped) were mounted in January, two against London (on the 11th and 12th), and one each against Cardiff (on the 2nd), Bristol (on the 3rd), Manchester (on the 9th), Portsmouth (on the 10th), and Avonmouth (on the 16th). No major raids were flown in February, although smaller attacks on London and Swansea did cause considerable damage.

Luftwaffe Bomber Order of Battle 4 January 1941

Luftflotte 2

General der Flieger Albert Kesselring Brussels

I. Fliegerkorps

General der Flieger Bruno Loerzer

Ghent

Stab/KG 2 Do 17 Z
I. Gruppe/KG 2 Do 17 Z
II. Gruppe/KG 2 Do 17 Z
III. Gruppe/KG 2 Do 17 Z
Stab/KG 3 Do 17 Z
I. Gruppe/KG 3 Do 17 Z
II. Gruppe/KG 3 Do 17 Z
III. Gruppe/KG 3 Do 17 Z
Stab/KG 53 He 111 H
I. Gruppe/KG 53 He 111 H
II. Gruppe/KG 53 He 111 H
III. Gruppe/KG 53 He 111 H

Oberst Herbert Rieckhoff
Major Waldemar Lerche
Major Kurt Rohde
Major Klaus Uebe
Obstlt. Wolfgang von Chamier-Glisczinski
Major Heinze
Hptm. Kurt Peters
Hptm. Rathmann
Oberst. Paul Witkus
Major Erich Kaufmann
Major Hans Steinweg
Major Willi Rohrbacher

Cambrai-Süd
Epinoy
Merville
Cambrai-Süd
Le Culot
Le Culot
Antwerp-Deurne
St. Trond
Lille-Nord
Vitry-en-Artois
Lille-Nord
Lübe, Liegnitz & Freiwalldau

IX. Fliegerkorps (ex 9. Fliegerdivision)

Gen. Major Joachim Coeler

Soesterberg

Stab/KG 4 He 111 P
I. Gruppe/KG 4 He 111 P
II. Gruppe/KG 4 He 111 P

III. Gruppe/KG 4 Ju 88 A
Stab/KG 30 Ju 88 A
I. Gruppe/KG 30 Ju 88 A
II. Gruppe/KG 30 Ju 88 A
III. Gruppe/KG 30 Ju 88 A

Obstlt. Hans-Joachim Rath
Major Schult
Major Dr. Gottlieb Wolff

Major Wolff Bühring ?
Major Erich Bloedorn
Major Fritz Doench
Hptm. Eberhard Roeger
Major Schumann?

Soesterberg
Soesterberg
Eindhoven (4./KG 4 at Comiso in Sicily)
Amsterdam/Schipol
Eindhoven
Gilze-Rijen
Gilze-Rijen
Amsterdam/Schipol

Luftflotte 3		General der Flieger Hugo Sperrle		Paris, St. Cloud	
I. Fliegerkorps		Generalleutnant Ulrich Grauert		Beauvais	
Stab/KG 1	He 111 H	Oberst Karl Angerstein	Rosières-en-Santerre	5	(2)
I. Gruppe/KG 1	He 111 H	(unknown)	Montdidier	34	(22)
II. Gruppe/KG 1	He 111 H	Obstlt. Benno Kosch ?	Montdidier (began re-equipping with the Ju 88 at Münster-Handorf soon afterwards)	30	(3)
III. Gruppe/KG 1	Ju 88 A	Hptm. Heinz Fischer	Münster-Handorf	25	(12)
Stab/KG 26	He 111 H	Oberst Alexander Holle	Beauvais	6	(2)
I. Gruppe/KG 26	He 111 H	Major Hermann Busch	Beauvais	26	(21)
III. Gruppe/KG 26	He 111 H	Major Günther Wolfien	Poix-Nord	25	(5)
Stab/KG 76	Do 17 Z	Obstlt. Stefan Fröhlich	Cormeilles-en-Vexin	2	(2)
I. Gruppe/KG 76	Do 17 Z	Hptm. Lindeiner	Giebelstadt (re-equipping with the Ju 88)	30	(6)
II. Gruppe/KG 76	Ju 88 A	Major Walter Storp	Ansbach (resting)	32	(0)
III. Gruppe/KG 76	Ju 88 A	Major von Benda	Illesheim (re-equipping with the Ju 88)	21	(0)
Stab/KG 77	Ju 88 A	Obstlt. Johann Raithel	Laon	1	(0)
I. Gruppe/KG 77	Ju 88 A	(unknown)	Laon	28	(7)
II. Gruppe/KG 77	Ju 88 A	Major Behrendt	Asch (Nord)	28	(17)
III. Gruppe/KG 77	Ju 88 A	Major von Frankenburg	Laon	30	(12)
IV. Fliegerkorps		Generalleutnant Kurt Flugbeil		Dinard	
I. Gruppe/LG 1	Ju 88 A	Hptm. Kuno Hoffmann	Wiener-Neustadt	21	(10)
Stab/KG 27	He 111 H & P	Major Gerhard Ulbricht	Tours	3	(2)
I. Gruppe/KG 27	He 111 H & P	Hptm. Fritz Reinhard	Tours	33	(13)
II. Gruppe/KG 27	He 111 P	Hptm. Günzel	Dinard	29	(19)
III. Gruppe/KG 27	He 111 P	Hptm. Hans-Henning Freiherr von Beust	Rennes	25	(11)
Stab/KG 40	He 111 H	(unknown)	Bordeaux-Merignac	?	(?)
I. Gruppe/KG 40	Fw 200 C,				
	He 111 H	Major Edgar Petersen	Bordeaux-Merignac	16	(0)
KGr 100	He 111 H	Hptm. Friedrich Carol Aschenbrenner	Vannes	38	(12)
KGr 606	Do 17 Z	Major Joachim Hahn	Lannion	18	(12)
V. Fliegerkorps		General der Flieger Robert Ritter von Greim		Villacoublay	
Stab/KG 51	Ju 88 A	Oberst Hans Bruno Schulz Hein	Paris/Orly	1	(1)
I. Gruppe/KG 51	Ju 88 A	Hptm. von Greiff	Villaroche	27	(10)
II. Gruppe/KG 51	Ju 88 A	Major Winkler	Paris/Orly	25	(9)
III. Gruppe/KG 51	Ju 88 A	Major Walter Marienfeld	Brétigny	24	(13)
Stab/KG 54	Ju 88 A	Obstlt. Otto Höhne	Evreux	1	(0)
I. Gruppe/KG 54	Ju 88 A	Hptm. Jobst Heinrich von Heydebrock	Evreux	30	(16)
II. Gruppe/KG 54	Ju 88 A	Hptm. Erhardt Krafft von Delmensingen	St Andre de l'Euie	28	(17)
Stab/KG 55	He 111 H	Obstlt. Hans Korte	Villacoublay	8	(4)
I. Gruppe/KG 55	He 111 H	Major Joachim Roeber	Dreux	30	(23)
II. Gruppe/KG 55	He 111 H	Major Hans-Joachim Gabriel	Chartres	30	(14)
III. Gruppe/KG 55	He 111 H	Hptm. Heinrich Wittmer	Villacoublay	30	(16)
KGr 806	Ju 88 A	(unknown)	Caen/Carpique	18	(12)
X. Fliegerkorps		General der Flieger Hans Geisler		Taormina (Sicily)	
Stab/LG 1	Ju 88 A	Obstlt. Friedrich-Karl Knust	Catania	?	(?)
II. Gruppe/LG 1	Ju 88 A	Hptm. Arved Crüger	Catania	38	(38)
III. Gruppe/LG 1	Ju 88 A	(unknown)	Catania	38	(38)
4. Staffel/KG 4	He 111 P	(unknown)	Comiso	12	(12)
II. Gruppe/KG 26	He 111 H	Hptm. Helmut Bertram	Comiso	37	(29)



ABOVE: The III. Gruppe of KG 1 under Hptm. Heinz Fischer, was the first to convert from the He 111 to the Ju 88, receiving its first Junkers at Münster-Handorf in January 1941. II./KG 1 completed transfer to the type at the same base in March, but I./KG 1 did not receive the Ju 88 until after it was redesignated III./KG 40 on 22 March 1941.

RIGHT: This Ju 88 A-4 also has its national insignia blacked out. Its Werk Nummer 5060 was stencilled at the top of the fin in white and gust locks have been fitted to the control surfaces.



LEFT AND ABOVE: On 24 December, 1940 the deputy leader of the Nazi Party, Rudolf Hess, visited 6./KG 55 at Villacoublay. In these photographs Hess is seen (**LEFT**) shaking hands with aircrew and (**ABOVE**) watching with interest as bombs are loaded aboard one of the Staffel's He 111s. In fact Hitler had ordered all bombing missions against Britain suspended from 24th to 26 December.

RIGHT: 2./KG 1 flew a series of night attacks against the British Isles during the winter of 1940/41, later switching to anti-shipping operations which included being readied to support the badly damaged German battleship Bismarck as she attempted to reach the safety of a German occupied port in May 1941. This particular aircraft, V4+AK, W.Nr. 4320, has two white silhouettes painted on its rudder indicating the success of its anti-shipping missions. The temporary black finish has not been applied to the fuselage sides, but the national insignia have been overpainted. 88_053 This Ju 88 A-4 also has its national insignia blacked out.



Heinkel He 111 H-4 of 2./KG 1, May 1941

The application of the temporary black finish to the undersides of the aircraft was often completed in a rather slapdash manner using long-handled brooms. The national insignia were also painted over using similar methods.

At this time many of the bombers involved in the night offensive began to adopt temporary black undersurface camouflage. This was applied using a special paint which had a very matt finish. Apart from the undersurfaces, the white areas of the national insignia were often daubed in similar paint to mute their brightness. The order (*Genst. 6. Abt. (IIIB), Nr. 7797/40 geh.*) for the implementation of this temporary finish was issued as early as 16 July 1940, but not apparently carried out for some months. The order's final paragraph stated:

'To obtain the required extent of the night protective camouflage against the reach of searchlight batteries all wing undersurfaces, fuselage undersurfaces and fuselage side surfaces, including the vertical tail surfaces, are to be covered in full with night camouflage. Only the national insignia on the upper surfaces of the wings are to be left visible. Sufficient night camouflage is to be washed off the outline of the covered underwing and fuselage Balkenkreuze so that they can still be recognised.'

The night offensive against Britain began to pick up again in March 1941. Two particularly heavy raids by a total of 238 bombers were launched against Portsmouth on the 10th and against Liverpool on the 12th by 316 aircraft. During the latter, two He 111s and two Ju 88s were shot down by RAF night fighters, increasing numbers of which were now being equipped with airborne interception radar. An example of such an action came the next night when raids were flown against Glasgow, Liverpool and Hull. The former attack was led by 14 aircraft from KGr 100, operating without *X-Verfahren* but helped by conditions of bright moonlight. As the formation approached the city one of the He 111 H-3s, 6N+AH, W.Nr. 3352, piloted by Lt. Wolfgang Kortemeier was intercepted by a Blenheim night fighter of 600 Squadron piloted by P/O G.A. Denby. Turning behind the German aircraft, Denby fired two bursts of machine gun fire which caused the Heinkel to dive away, but not before return fire had damaged the Blenheim's aileron. The Heinkel finally crashed at 21.15 hrs at Drumshang Brae near Dunure in Ayresshire, and caught fire. The crew of four were all injured and taken prisoner.

Next night, the *Luftwaffe* bomber force divided its attentions between Glasgow and Sheffield, KG 55 losing two aircraft at Falfield in Gloucestershire, both shot down by night fighters. A major operation was flown against Hull by 378 aircraft on 18/19 March, and against London by 479 aircraft the following night. Although several aircraft were damaged, the only loss on these two raids was a Ju 88 A-5 of 5./KG 54 which crashed at Evreux while taking off for the Hull raid on the night of the 18th/19th. The month ended with two raids on the Royal Navy base at Plymouth on the nights of 20/21st and 21/22nd, the 'Greifen' *Geschwader* losing two Heinkels on the latter, one of which was the machine in which *Hptm.* Wolfgang Berlin, the *Staffelkapitän* of 6./KG 55, was flying as navigator.



ABOVE: An He 111 of KG 55 is towed from its hangar by a half-track vehicle during the winter of 1940/41. By this time the paint finish has become extremely weathered which has resulted in the camouflage pattern of the two greens (RLM 70 and 71) appearing more visible than usual.

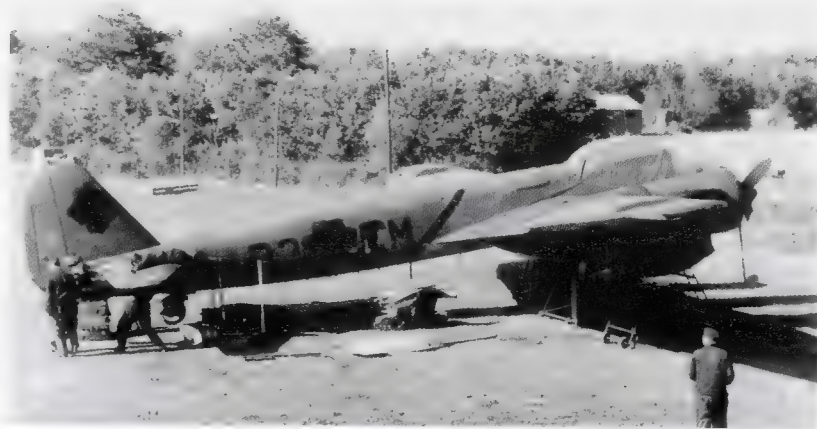
BELOW: As RAF fighter defence became more and more organised during the Battle of Britain and the Blitz the *Luftwaffe* began to lose more and more aircraft. A Ju 88 lies smashed and broken while British troops stand guard to protect it from souvenir hunters prior to the arrival of an RAF intelligence team.



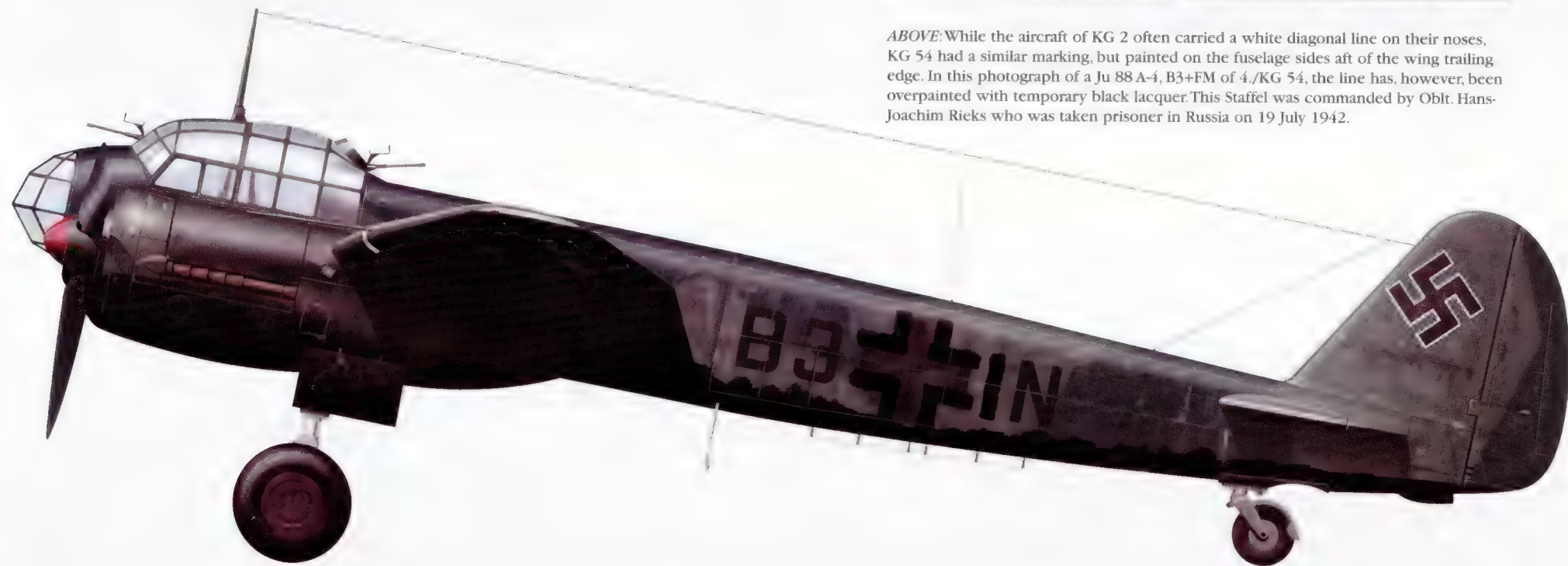
LEFT: This Ju 88 A-5 coded 3Z+DM, W.Nr. 7103 of 4./KG 77, was shot down by RAF fighters just after midday on 23 March 1941 and crashed at Parsons Farm, Poling, in West Sussex. Of the crew of four, one was killed and the others taken prisoner.



LEFT: This photograph shows ground crews manhandling another Ju 88 A-4s, this time B3+IN of 5./KG 54, during the early summer of 1941. Oblt. Günther Seubert was in command of this Staffel at this time. He was killed in Russia on 4 March 1942.



ABOVE: While the aircraft of KG 2 often carried a white diagonal line on their noses, KG 54 had a similar marking, but painted on the fuselage sides aft of the wing trailing edge. In this photograph of a Ju 88 A-4, B3+FM of 4./KG 54, the line has, however, been overpainted with temporary black lacquer. This Staffel was commanded by Oblt. Hans-Joachim Rieks who was taken prisoner in Russia on 19 July 1942.



Junkers Ju 88 A-4 of 5./KG 54, early summer 1941

Although this aircraft has also been daubed with temporary black paint, the application is somewhat different to that of the He 111 of KG 1 illustrated on page 127. In this case the *Hakenkreuz* (swastika) has not been overpainted although the *Balkenkreuz* national insignia have been crudely blacked out.

In April 1941, a number of bomber units, including most of KG 2 and the whole of KG 51, were transferred to the Balkans for operations against Yugoslavia and Greece. This did little to reduce the number of raids made on Britain during the month, however. The first major attack was flown on the night of 7/8 April against Glasgow and Liverpool. Five bombers were lost in this raid and a further seven, all Heinkels, were destroyed on the next night during a raid on Coventry. One of these came from 9./KG 26, one from 2./KG 27 and the other five from KG 55. The latter included G1+DL, in which the *Kommandeur* of 1./KG 55, *Hptm.* Otto Bodemeyer, was the navigator ².

During an attack on Birmingham on the night of 9/10 April, an He 111 of KG 27 piloted by *Uffz.* Rudolf Müller was shot down at 01.45 hrs at Hales Lane in Smethwick. An enraged mob then attacked the surviving member of the crew who had baled out and he was badly beaten before being rescued by soldiers. It should be said, however, that these occasions were rare, and in most cases German aircrew were treated with the utmost correctness. In several cases British civilians are recorded as having risked their own lives to save those of their enemies.

On 10/11 April, six bombers were lost during a raid on Birmingham, including four from KG 55, one from 3./KGr 100 and the Ju 88 A-5, B3+PH, piloted by *Oblt.* Heinrich Wickert, *Kapitän* of 1./KG 54, which was shot down by an RAF Beaufighter. Four further aircraft were lost the following night during an attack on Bristol and on the 15/16th the first raid was flown on Belfast. Two massive attacks, by 685 and 712 aircraft respectively, were made on London on the nights of the 16/17th and 18/19 April. During the second raid over 1,000 tonnes of bombs were dropped for the first time. The activities of the *Luftwaffe* bomber force tailed off during the next few nights, concentrating on the ports of Plymouth, Liverpool and Portsmouth. A crew member from KG 26 remembered:

"By the spring of 1941 I personally felt worn out through all the sorties I had flown over England. Then we were told that a heavy blow was to be struck against London, which we assumed had already suffered irreparable damage but was apparently still functioning to some extent. Certainly our reconnaissance photographs showed damage, but it seemed to me scattered and, owing to the size of the city, it obviously needed a far larger force of bombers than we possessed to deal it a real knock-out blow."

This attack was mounted on the night of 10/11 May, but in fact fewer bombers (541) were mustered than for the previous raids in April. This time the sorties were spread throughout the hours of darkness, beginning at 23.00 hrs and ending at 05.37 hrs the next morning. The bombing caused 2,200 fires and destroyed 700 acres (283 hectares), figures comparable with the Great Fire of London of 1666. As in the much earlier raid on Coventry in November 1940, water mains received damage early in the attack, and extracting water from the Thames proved difficult because it was at low tide. Apart from the material damage, 1,436 people were killed, 1,800 seriously injured and 12,000 made homeless. An He 111 gunner, Georg Kessler of KG 26, remembered a particular incident during the raid:

"In my open position on top of the fuselage it was particularly frightening when the shells burst close to us and I kept my head down as the flak splinters spattered through our thin metal skin. Owing to the glare from a very large fire and the need to take evasive action, I believe our pilot failed to see another bomber directly ahead of us. Not until the very last moment did the captain shout a warning but then it was almost too late, for one of our propellers just caught the top of the other aeroplane's tail fin and we shuddered and fell away at once, partly because the pilot wrenched the wheel hard to port. I believe the other aircraft was not seriously damaged and flew off, perhaps unaware it had been struck."

Losses included one He 111 from 1./KG 28, two from KG 53, five from KG 55 and one from KGr 806. This was the last major attack by the *Luftwaffe* bomber force before most *Kampfgeschwader* left for the East during the middle of June 1941. The only unit left to carry out attacks on mainland Britain was II./KG 2 which at this time had also begun to re-equip with the new Do 217 E.

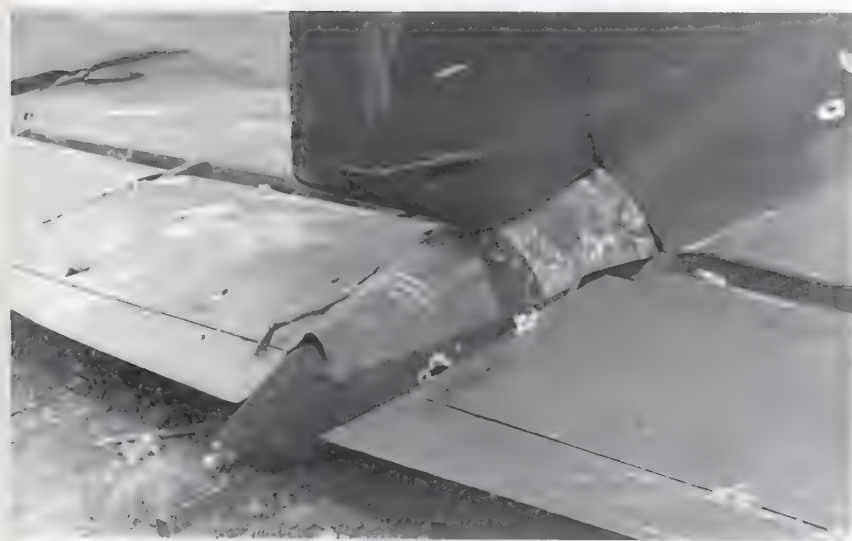
BELOW: Although the undersurfaces of *Luftwaffe* bombers were painted black, this colour was rarely applied to externally mounted bombs which often remained in sand yellow.





LEFT: Major Gabelmann, Kommandeur of IV.(Erg)/KG 3, and his crew stand in front of the camera after completing a successful mission. The badge of the unit, a shaggy haired brown cavewoman holding a silver trident and a bomb painted on a white shield edged in black, can be seen on the nose of their Do 17 Z. The significance of this badge is unknown. During the Battle of Britain, Gabelmann had commanded I./KG 3, but later became the first leader of the *Ergänzungsgruppe* when it was established at Chievres in Belgium. Sources differ regarding the date of its formation, some saying October 1940, others May 1941.

RIGHT: During the early spring of 1941, II./KG 1 exchanged its He 111s for Ju 88s at Münster-Handorf. This aircraft carries the badge of the 4. Staffel, a black and white bull snorting red lightning while riding a silver bomb. The shield was in white outlined in black.



LEFT: This close-up view of the tail of an He 111 shows considerable battle damage, probably as the result of British anti-aircraft fire. A special motto was painted on the rear fuselage tail cone which appears to read 'Nach Feindflug, Sicher Abnehmen! Lauf frei?' which can be translated as 'After combat, carefully remove! Barrel empty?' The legend 'Nicht Anfassen' (Don't touch) appears on the elevator flap in white.

By the spring of 1941, it had become obvious that the old Do 17 Z lacked the performance to continue successful operations over the British Isles for much longer. As early as 1937, the Dornier company had begun developing a successor to the 'Flying Pencil', an aircraft similar in overall layout, but capable of carrying much heavier loads. This completely structurally redesigned aircraft was to be known as the Do 217 and, because of the greater accuracy which could be achieved by dive-bombing, as opposed to the results of level bombing with the bomb sights then being employed, was to be capable of delivering its bombs in a dive. Like all German bombers of the period, the crew of four were concentrated in the forward fuselage. The pilot sat on the port side of the aircraft with the navigator/bomb aimer to his right, while the radio operator was seated behind. Apart from his duties with the radio, he also operated the upper rearward-firing guns. The fourth member of the crew, a dedicated gunner, was seated in the centre of the cockpit, controlling the downward-firing weapons.

The prototype Do 217 V1 made its first flight on 11 October 1938 powered by two 1,075 hp Daimler-Benz DB 601 A engines, but tests were to show that the new bomber possessed none of the good-natured flying characteristics of its predecessor. A second prototype followed in November 1938 but the V3, which first flew on 25 February 1939, and the next two aircraft, were powered by Jumo 211 engines. These prototypes were to lead to the Do 217 A reconnaissance aircraft and Do 217 C bomber, but these were only built in small numbers.

Meanwhile work had begun on a new variant, the Do 217 E-1, which was to have an extensively deepened fuselage which enabled the installation of a bomb bay 4.5 metre (14 ft 9 in) long, sufficient to accommodate two 1,000 kg bombs. Armament comprised a single forward-firing 15 mm MG 151 cannon and five 7.9 mm MG 17 machine guns. The first prototype for the new variant was the Do 217 V7 which was initially powered by two 1,550 hp BMW 139 radials, these later being replaced by 1,600 hp BMW 801 As. The enlarged fuselage did nothing to improve the aircraft's rather sluggish handling which resulted in the bestowing of the unflattering nickname of the 'Pregnant Bedbug'.

The first *Luftwaffe* bomber unit to begin re-equipping with the Do 217 E-1 was 6./KG 2 which moved to the Dornier factory at Oberpfaffenhofen on 18 January 1941. It was joined there by the remaining *Staffeln* of II./KG 2 on 22 February, but problems with the aircraft, particularly with its BMW engines, forced 6./KG 2 to return to Merville with its Do 17s in March. The 4. and 5./KG 2, re-joined by the 6. Staffel on 15 April, continued working up with the Do 217 initially at Oberpfaffenhofen and then Achmer in north-west Germany until the *Gruppe*, under Major Johannes Hüber, finally became operational at Evreux in France on 1 July 1941. The first Do 217 E-1 loss occurred on 14 July when U5+GN, W.Nr. 5075, was reported missing.

The second unit to receive the Do 217 E was II./KG 40 which had been newly formed under *Hptm. Freiherr Wendt von Schlippenbach*. Its 4. Staffel, had been formed in January 1941 with



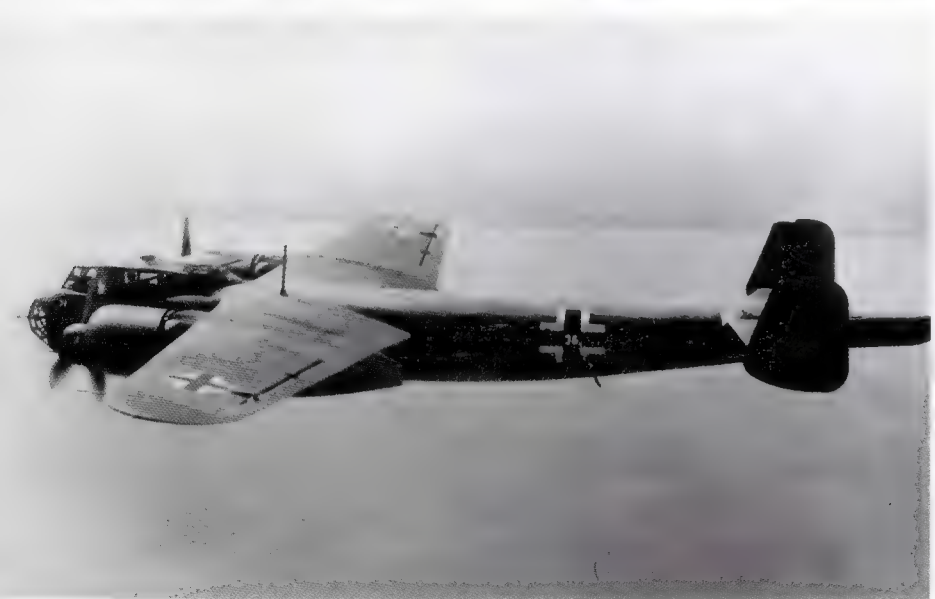
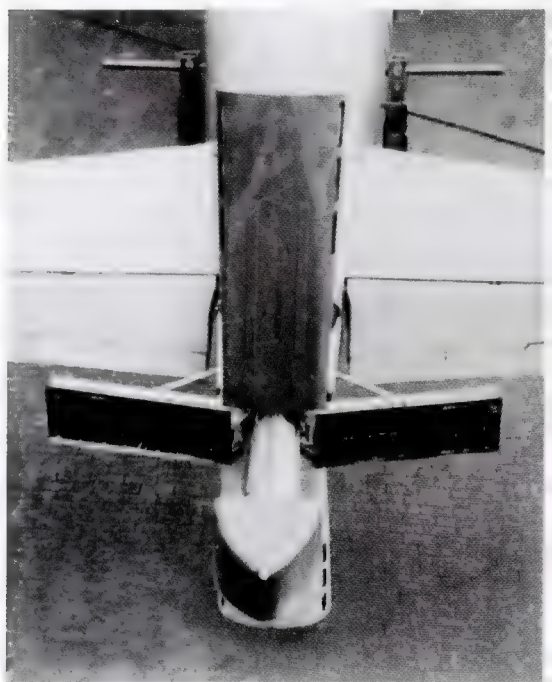
RIGHT: Only four pre-production Do 217 C-0 bombers were built, this variant being powered by two DB 601 A engines. Three of these aircraft are shown under construction at the Dornier factory at Friedrichshafen, the black green and dark green camouflage pattern already having been applied to the uppersurfaces.



LEFT AND BELOW: An early production Do 217 E-1 under test. The aircraft carries standard Luftwaffe bomber camouflage of black green (RLM 70) and dark green (RLM 71) uppersurfaces with pale blue (RLM 65) beneath. It has the radio call sign RH+ER with the production number '44' (the last two digits of the Werk Nummer, 0044) painted in the centre of the fuselage Balkenkreuz in white. The aircraft was fitted with a four-ribbed dive brake behind the tail which opened out to enable the aircraft to make diving attacks. Subsequent service tests were to show that this was far from satisfactory and it was rarely used operationally.



LEFT AND BELOW: The dive brake mounted behind the tail of the Do 217 proved unsatisfactory when used operationally, placing severe strain on the rear fuselage and often resulting in structural distortion. It was later replaced by underwing slatted brakes which were lowered through 90 degrees.



LEFT: The Do 217 E-2 differed from the E-1 in being fitted with an electrically-operated dorsal turret housing a 13 mm MG 131 machine gun. This photograph shows the 36th production aircraft which was the first to test new slotted dive brakes mounted beneath the wings, outboard of the engines.



LEFT: Two Do 217 E-1s of 7./KG 2 seen from another bomber in the formation. The aircraft nearest the camera is U5+BR, that behind U5+CR. The machines have black undersurfaces and carry white rear fuselage bands. The undersides of their engine cowlings are also painted white. An interesting variation is that the fuselage Balkenkreuz has narrow white outlines which may have been a special factory modification to reduce the marking's visibility in night operations. The individual aircraft letter of the nearer machine appears to be painted in yellow rather than white.

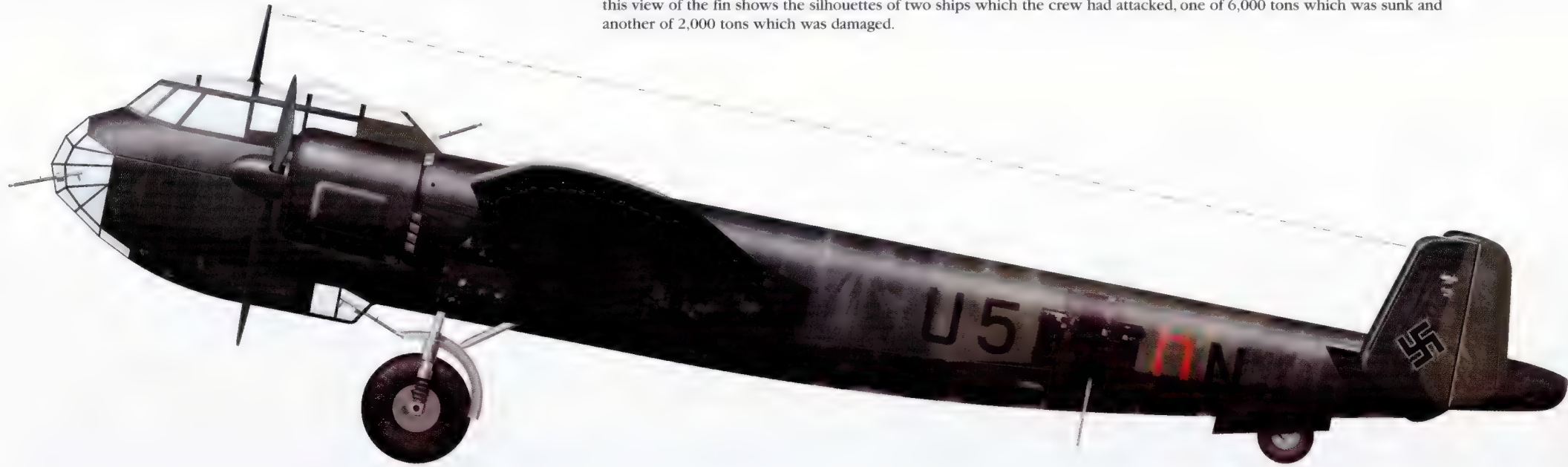
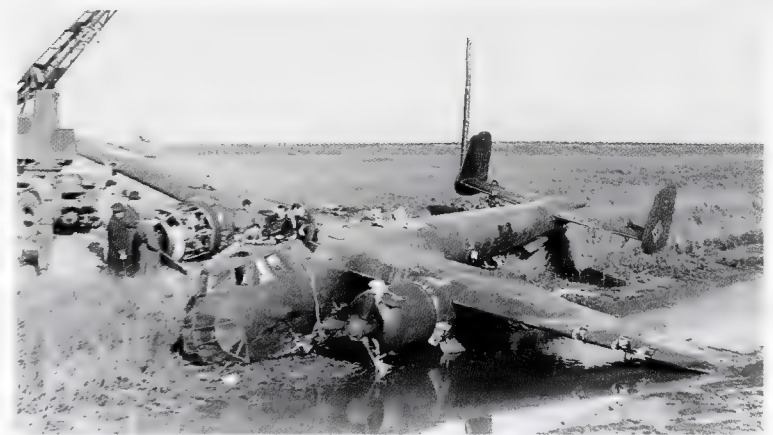
BELOW: Luftwaffe crew members gather round a Do 217 E-1 of KG 2 following its return from operations. The aircraft has temporary black undersurface camouflage, already considerably worn by action. The tips of the spinners are in yellow.

BELOW: The first unit to re-equip with the Do 217 was 6./KG 2 which, after a long period of training and working-up, finally became operational at Evreux in France on 1 July 1941. The Geschwader badge, a black fist grasping a mallet on a white shield, later resulted in the unit receiving the name of the 'Holzhammer' or Mallet Geschwader.





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 RIGHT: One of the first Do 217 E-1s to fall into British hands was this aircraft, U5+DN, W.Nr. 0069. Piloted by Lt. Dolenga of 5./KG 2, it was returning to Evreux in France following a sortie over the eastern Atlantic on the night of 11/12 October 1941, when it went off course. The aircraft's radio compass then homed on to what it thought were the German beacons at Paimpol and Evreux, but were in fact the spoof British radio stations at Templecombe and Newbury. Now guided by these spoof beacons, the aircraft flew from the Bristol Channel eastwards across southern England until it came to the Thames Estuary. Thinking that this was the English Channel and the northern coast of France, the crew turned south to fly inland but came to another coastline, which was indeed the English Channel. However, by this time, their fuel was almost exhausted so Dolenga was forced to crash-land his Dornier at Jury's Gut near Lydd in Kent. It was then dismantled before being subjected to detailed examination at the Royal Aircraft Establishment Farnborough. During the investigation the tail section was removed, and this view of the fin shows the silhouettes of two ships which the crew had attacked, one of 6,000 tons which was sunk and another of 2,000 tons which was damaged.



Dornier Do 217 E-1 of 5./KG 2, 12 October 1941

This aircraft, piloted by Lt. Dolenga, crash landed at Lydd in Kent on 12 October 1941 due to the activities of the spoof British radio stations at Templecombe and Newbury. It was the first Do 217 to be examined by British intelligence.

Luftwaffe Bomber Units Operational in late June 1941

Unit	Aircraft	Lfl.	Commander
<i>Stab/KG 1</i>	He 111	1	<i>Oberst Karl Angerstein</i>
<i>I. Gruppe/KG 1</i>	-	-	<i>(redesignated III./KG 40 on 1 Apr 1941)</i>
<i>II. Gruppe/KG 1</i>	Ju 88 A	1	<i>Hptm Otto Stams</i>
<i>III. Gruppe/KG 1</i>	Ju 88 A	1	<i>Major Walter Lehweß-Litzmann</i>
<i>Stab/KG 2</i>	Do 17 Z	2	<i>Oberst Herbert Rieckhoff</i>
<i>I. Gruppe/KG 2</i>	Do 17 Z	2	<i>Major Waldemar Lerche</i>
<i>II. Gruppe/KG 2</i>	-	-	<i>Major Johannes Hübner</i>
			<i>(re-equipping with the Do 217 E)</i>
<i>III. Gruppe/KG 2</i>	Do 17 Z	2	<i>Oberst Heinrich Conrady</i>
<i>Stab/KG 3</i>	Ju 88 A	2	<i>Oberst Wolfgang von Chamier-Glisczinski</i>
<i>I. Gruppe/KG 3</i>	Ju 88 A	2	<i>Major Heinze</i>
<i>II. Gruppe/KG 3</i>	Ju 88 A	2	<i>Hptm. Kurt Peters</i>
<i>III. Gruppe/KG 3</i>	Do 17 Z	2	<i>Hptm. Rathmann ?</i>
<i>Stab/KG 4</i>	He 111	2	<i>Obstlt. Hans-Joachim Rath</i>
<i>I. Gruppe/KG 4</i>	He 111	2	<i>Major von Groddec</i>
<i>II. Gruppe/KG 4</i>	He 111	2	<i>Obstlt. Dr. Gottlieb Wolff</i>
<i>III. Gruppe/KG 4</i>	He 111	2	<i>Major Wolfgang Bühring</i>
<i>Stab/KG 26</i>	-	-	<i>(redesignated Stab/Fliegerführer Nord in June 1941)</i>
<i>I. Gruppe/KG 26</i>	He 111 H	5	<i>Major Hermann Busch</i>
<i>II. Gruppe/KG 26</i>	He 111 H	X	<i>Major W. Beyling</i>
<i>III. Gruppe/KG 26</i>	He 111 H	3	<i>Major Viktor von Lossberg</i>
<i>Stab/KG 27</i>	He 111	4	<i>Major Gerhard Ulbricht</i>
<i>I. Gruppe/KG 27</i>	He 111	4	<i>Hptm. Fritz Reinhard</i>
<i>II. Gruppe/KG 27</i>	He 111	4	<i>Hptm. Reinhard Günzel</i>
<i>III. Gruppe/KG 27</i>	He 111	4	<i>Hptm. Hans-Henning Freiherr von Beust</i>
<i>Stab/KG 30</i>	Ju 88 A	5	<i>Obstlt. Erich Bloedorn</i>
<i>I. Gruppe/KG 30</i>	Ju 88 A	5	<i>Hptm. Heinrich Lau</i>
<i>II. Gruppe/KG 30</i>	Ju 88 A	5	<i>Hptm. Eberhard Roeger</i>
<i>III. Gruppe/KG 30</i>	Ju 88 A	5	<i>Major Schumann</i>
<i>Stab/KG 40</i>	Fw 200	3	<i>Major Edgar Petersen</i>
<i>I. Gruppe/KG 40</i>	Fw 200	3	<i>Hptm. Edmund Daser</i>
<i>II. Gruppe/KG 40</i>	Do 217 E	3	<i>Hptm. Freiherr Wendt von Schlippenbach</i>
<i>III. Gruppe/KG 40</i>	He 111	3	<i>Hptm. Robert Kowalewski</i>
<i>Stab/KG 51</i>	Ju 88 A	4	<i>Major Hans-Bruno Schulz-Heyn</i>
<i>I. Gruppe/KG 51</i>	Ju 88 A	4	<i>Hptm. Heinrich Hahn</i>
<i>II. Gruppe/KG 51</i>	Ju 88 A	4	<i>Major Wilhelm von Friedeberg</i>
<i>III. Gruppe/KG 51</i>	Ju 88 A	4	<i>Major Walter Marienfeld</i>
<i>Stab/KG 53</i>	He 111	2	<i>Obstlt. Paul Weitkus</i>
<i>I. Gruppe/KG 53</i>	He 111	2	<i>Obstlt. Erich Kaufmann</i>
<i>II. Gruppe/KG 53</i>	He 111	2	<i>Major Hans Steinweg</i>
<i>III. Gruppe/KG 53</i>	He 111	2	<i>Major Richard Fabian</i>
<i>Stab/KG 54</i>	Ju 88 A	4	<i>Obstlt. Otto Höhne</i>
<i>I. Gruppe/KG 54</i>	Ju 88 A	4	<i>Hptm. Richard Linke</i>
<i>II. Gruppe/KG 54</i>	Ju 88 A	4	<i>Major Erhardt Krafft von Delmensingen</i>
<i>Stab/KG 55</i>	He 111	4	<i>Oberst Benno Kosch</i>
<i>I. Gruppe/KG 55</i>	He 111	4	<i>Major Rudolf Kiel</i>
<i>II. Gruppe/KG 55</i>	He 111	4	<i>Major Dr. Ernst Kuhl</i>
<i>III. Gruppe/KG 55</i>	He 111	4	<i>Hptm. Heinrich Wittmer</i>
<i>Stab/KG 76</i>	Ju 88 A	1	<i>Obstlt. Dr. Ernst Bormann</i>
<i>I. Gruppe/KG 76</i>	Ju 88 A	1	<i>Hptm. Robert von Sichart</i>
<i>II. Gruppe/KG 76</i>	Ju 88 A	1	<i>Hptm. Freiherr Volprecht Riedesel zu Eisenbach</i>
<i>III. Gruppe/KG 76</i>	Ju 88 A	1	<i>Major von Benda ?</i>
<i>Stab/KG 77</i>	Ju 88 A	1	<i>Major Johann Raithel</i>
<i>I. Gruppe/KG 77</i>	Ju 88 A	1	<i>Hptm. Joachim Pötter</i>
<i>II. Gruppe/KG 77</i>	Ju 88 A	1	<i>Hptm. Dietrich Peltz</i>
<i>III. Gruppe/KG 77</i>	Ju 88 A	1	<i>Major von Frankenburg ?</i>
<i>KGr 100</i>	He 111	2	<i>Hptm. Kurd Aschenbrenner</i>
<i>KGr 606</i>	Ju 88 A	3	<i>Major Joachim Hahn</i>
<i>KGr 806</i>	Ju 88 A	1	<i>Obstlt. Hans Emig (KIA on 28 June 1941)</i>
<i>Stab/LG 1</i>	Ju 88 A	X	<i>Oberst Friedrich-Karl Knust</i>
<i>I. Gruppe/LG 1</i>	Ju 88 A	X	<i>Major Eduard Teske</i>
<i>II. Gruppe/LG 1</i>	Ju 88 A	X	<i>Hptm. Arved Crüger</i>
<i>III. Gruppe/LG 1</i>	Ju 88 A	X	<i>unknown</i>

Key

Bomber units on the Eastern Front

Bomber units in the Mediterranean

Bomber units on the Western Front

Bomber units in Norway

Lfl. 1 *Luftflotte 1*, based in East Prussia with Army Group North. Headquarters at Norkitten near Insterburg under *Generaloberst* Alfred Keller, including *I.Fliegerkorps* and *Luftwaffenkommando Baltic*.

Lfl. 2 *Luftflotte 2*, based in Poland with Army Group Centre. Headquarters at Warsaw-Bielany, under *Generalfeldmarschall* Albert Kesselring, including *II.* and *VIII.Fliegerkorps*

Lfl. 3 *Luftflotte 3*, based in France and the Netherlands. Headquarters in Paris, under *Generalfeldmarschall* Hugo Sperrle, including *IX.Fliegerkorps* and *Fliegerführer Atlantik*

Lfl. 4 *Luftflotte 4*, based in Poland and Rumania with Army Group South. Headquarters at Jasionsk near Rzeszow under *Generaloberst* Alexander Löhr including *II.Fliegerkorps* in Rumania and *V.Fliegerkorps*

Lfl. 5 *Luftflotte 5*, based in Norway. Headquarters at Oslo, under *Generaloberst* Hans Stumpff including *Fliegerführer Kirkenes*

X *X.Fliegerkorps*, based in the Mediterranean area. Headquarters at Taormina in Sicily under *General* Hans Geisler

He 111s, being joined by 5. and 6./KG 40 on 1 May 1941. The latter *Staffeln* received their first Do 217s at Lüneburg. Unlike KG 2's aircraft, which had black green and dark green upper surfaces and black beneath, the aircraft of II./KG 40, operating anti-shipping sorties over the sea, were painted pale grey overall.

The transfer of most of the *Luftwaffe* bomber units to the East for *Barbarossa* from late May 1941 meant the virtual end of night bombing on the British Isles. By late June the only first line bombers to remain with *Luftflotte* 3 were the Do 217s of II./KG 2 and II./KG 40, the He 111s of III./KG 26 and III./KG 40 and the Fw 200s of I./KG 40. Most of these were engaged in anti-shipping sorties.

To compensate for this lack of strength, the bomber force was often forced to deploy its *Ergänzungsgruppen* (operational training groups) to fly combat missions. By July 1941, the following such units had been formed:

IV.(Erg)/KG 1	Oct 1940	Münster-Handorf	
IV.(Erg)/KG 2	Mar 1941	Achmer	10.(Erg)/KG 2 formed early Aug 1940
IV.(Erg)/KG 3	Oct 1940	Chievres	
IV.(Erg)/KG 4	Mar 1941	Fassberg	12.(Erg)/KG 4 was assigned but not formed until 1 Jul 42
IV.(Erg)/KG 26	Mar 1941	Lübeck-Blankensee	10.(Erg)/KG 26 formed in Oct 1940
IV.(Erg)/KG 27	Oct 1940	Avord	
IV.(Erg)/KG 30	Oct 1940	Ludwigslust	Formed from III./KG 30
IV.(Erg)/KG 40	mid 1941	Orleans-Bricy	An <i>Ausbildungsstaffel</i> / KG 40 had been formed in Jul 1940 at Amiens, becoming <i>Erg.</i> /KG 28 in mid 1941.
IV.(Erg)/KG 51	Jan 1941	Lechfeld	
IV.(Erg)/KG 53	Mar 1941	Lille-Vembrechis	
IV.(Erg)/KG 54	Apr 1941		
IV.(Erg)/KG 55	Mar 1941	Chartres	<i>Erg.</i> /KG 55 formed in Aug 1940.
IV.(Erg)/KG 76	Mar 1941	Beaumont	<i>Erg.</i> /KG 76 formed in Jul 1940.
IV.(Erg)/KG 77	Oct 1940	Laon-Couvron	

1. The 'Blitz', as it was to become known in Britain, originally had no connection with night bombing and is a contraction of the German word 'Blitzkrieg', meaning 'Lightning War.'
2. It was common practice in the *Luftwaffe* for the senior ranking officer to be the navigator rather than the pilot.



LEFT: The Ju 88 began to replace the Do 17 Z in service with I./KG 3 'Blitz' in May 1941. The unit's badge, a red lightning flash on a white shield, was painted beneath the cockpit on both sides of the fuselage. Aircraft from other parts of KG 3 carried a similar badge, but in different colours. The Geschwader Stab had a white lightning flash on a green shield, the II. Gruppe a white flash on a red shield and the III. Gruppe a red flash on a yellow shield.

All at Sea

Anti-shipping Operations, July 1940-January 1942

"I got within one and a half miles of the Condor before it noticed my presence. I intercepted it after nine minutes' flying and ranged up alongside at 600 yards and slightly above it. When my machine was slightly ahead of its starboard quarter the stern gun opened fire. These rounds passed underneath or fell short of my Hurricane. It took quite an appreciable time to get abeam and the for'ard gun was also firing – again the rounds passed underneath or short. The Focke-Wulf then turned sharply to port, but seemed to change its mind and turned back on its original course. By this time I had reached its starboard bow and three machine guns opened up, as well as a for'ard cannon. I did a quick turn to port and opened fire just abaft of the beam. I fired five-second bursts all the way until I was 40 yards astern of the enemy. Another short burst at this range and my guns were empty. I noticed pieces flying off the starboard side of the Focke-Wulf and it appeared to be alight inside the fuselage. I broke away to port at 30 yards. My windshield and hood were covered with oil and I quickly jumped to the conclusion that my engine oil system had been badly hit. [...] I then made one or two half-hearted attempts to bale out, but the machine nosed down and caught me half out. I changed my mind and decided to ditch in the sea near HMS Wanderer, and did so. The ship sent a boat and I was extremely well looked after."

Lt. R. Everett, Hurricane pilot of 804 Squadron flying from HMS Maplin

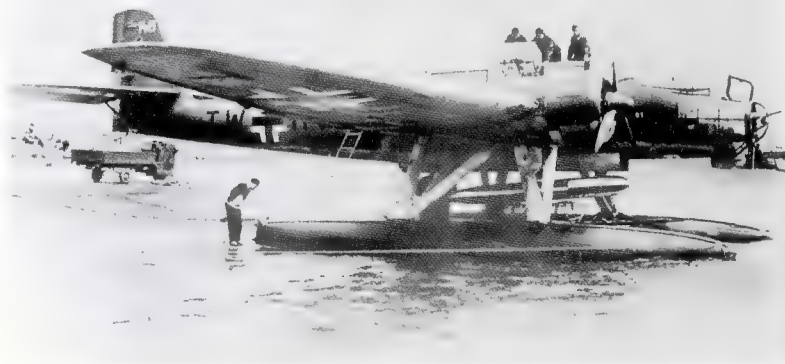
3 August 1940

After the failure of the strategic bombing of the United Kingdom, first by day and then by night, to bring about the country's capitulation, the only alternative left to Nazi Germany in mid-1941 was to continue the blockade of the island and literally starve its people into submission. This was merely a continuation of the policy begun in July 1940 but which had been curtailed in order that the Luftwaffe could participate in 'Adler Tag'.

From the middle of August, relatively few such sorties were flown, although minelaying operations gradually increased (see table). Many of these were carried out by KG 26, KG 30 and the dedicated minelaying Gruppe, KGr 126. Apart from the bomber force, the coastal reconnaissance units – Küstenfliegergruppe 106 and 506 equipped mainly with He 115 floatplanes – were also engaged in minelaying sorties.

BELOW:

The He 115 flew many of the Luftwaffe's early minelaying sorties, equipping a number of Küstenfliegergruppen (Coastal Reconnaissance Groups). Several of these were redesignated Kampfguppen and these were eventually re-equipped with the He 111 or Ju 88. This photo shows an He 115 C variant.



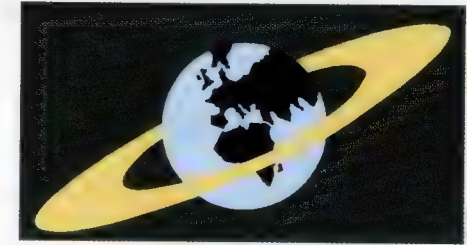
Month	Anti-shipping sorties	Bombs dropped (tons)	Minelaying sorties	Mines dropped
Aug 1940	239	113	246	328
Sep 1940	90	42	279	669
Oct 1940	60	135	610	562
Nov 1940	23	18	605	1,215
Dec 1940	8	6	192	557
Jan 1941	22	23	58	144
Feb 1941	163	71	207	376
Mar 1941	139	122	234	410
Apr 1941	263	285	212	433
May 1941	211	181	222	363
Jun 1941	312	103	371	647
Total	1,530	1,099	3,236	5,704



ABOVE: III./KG 40 was formed from I./KG 1 at Brest-Lanveoc on 24 March 1941 and retained its He 111 Hs for anti-shipping operations until June 1941 when it was re-equipped with the Fw 200. Its first Kommandeur was Hptm. Robert Kowalewski who, as a Major, later led the first Ar 234 jet bomber wing. This aircraft carries the code F8+ES with the red individual letter 'E' outlined in red.



LEFT: Major Robert Kowalewski was one of the Luftwaffe's most famous bomber pilots. He was born on 15 March 1914 in Berlin and gained valuable experience with Harlinghausen's Stabsstaffel of X. Fliegerkorps. He took over command of II./KG 26 in January 1941 and III./KG 40 when it was formed from March of the same year. In January 1944 he was appointed Kommodore of ZG 76 before moving to KG 76.



KG 40 Emblem



Heinkel He 111 H of 8./KG 40, April 1941

Following its formation from I./KG 1 on 24 March 1941 III./KG 40 was initially equipped with the He 111 H. These aircraft carried the standard Luftwaffe camouflage for the period.

BELOW: Oblt. Bernhard Joep of 2./KG 40 is interviewed in October 1940 after his Fw 200 had severely damaged and set on fire the second largest vessel in the British transport fleet, the 42,000 ton troopship *Empress of Britain* off the north-west coast of Ireland on the 26th. The vessel was subsequently sunk by a U-boat and besides being the largest ship sunk in the war to date was also the largest ever sunk by a U-boat. Joep, who was born in Leipzig on 10 May 1914, was later to lead both KG 100 and KG 30 and was awarded the Ritterkreuz on 30 December 1940 and the Eichenlaub on 24 March 1944.



During one such minelaying sortie on 22 July 1940, *Hptm.* Hajo Herrmann led a group of Ju 88s from 7./KG 30 to place their 500 kg (1,100 lb) ordnance in Plymouth Sound. Approaching the target with the aircraft in a nose-up attitude and with the dive brakes extended, he suddenly came upon a barrage balloon in his path:

"I tried to turn away, but the Ju 88 was flying very slowly and the controls were sloppy and ineffective. The next thing I knew was that our aircraft had virtually landed on top of the balloon. This was a somewhat traumatic experience, the balloon was filled with highly inflammable hydrogen. It lasted only a few seconds but it felt like an hour. Then I noticed the British searchlights were shining from above – we had fallen off and were now upside down, with virtually no forward flying speed, and going out of control. I felt as though I was playing a piano which was falling from a fifth storey!"

Herrmann closed the dive brakes and rammed the throttles forward, but with no success. Just as he ordered the crew to bale out, control returned only a few hundred feet above the city, and he pulled away. The success of operations by KG 30 is indicated by the fact that by the end of June 1940, five members of the unit had been awarded the *Ritterkreuz*.

One unit that did carry out more or less continuous anti-shipping operations from early 1940 was 1./KG 40 under Major Edgar Petersen. With its long-range four-engined Fw 200 Condors, the unit was able to fly sorties far out into the Atlantic. One of its first major successes came on 26 October 1940 when the aircraft piloted by *Oblt.* Bernhard Joep of 2./KG 40 severely damaged the 42,000 ton troopship, *Empress of Britain*, 70 miles off the north-west coast of Ireland. It was his first operational sortie and resulted in the award of the coveted *Ritterkreuz* on 30 December 1940.

The camouflage for the Fw 200s was officially described as *Grün* (RLM colour 72 – a sea green) and *Grün* (RLM 73 – a paler sea green) uppersurfaces with *Hellblau* (pale blue - RLM 65) beneath, although this scheme was normally reserved for floatplanes. By the end of 1940, the Fw 200 Condors had sunk 15 ships, no less than 37 per cent of the total tonnage lost to air attack. This success was to lead Winston Churchill to call the Condor the "Scourge of the Atlantic". Joep later made the following comment on the operations flown at this time:

"The convoys, even large ones, often sailed without any air defences at all. On the Condor we could carry only a few bombs, but we could go very low when attacking the ships and make every one count."

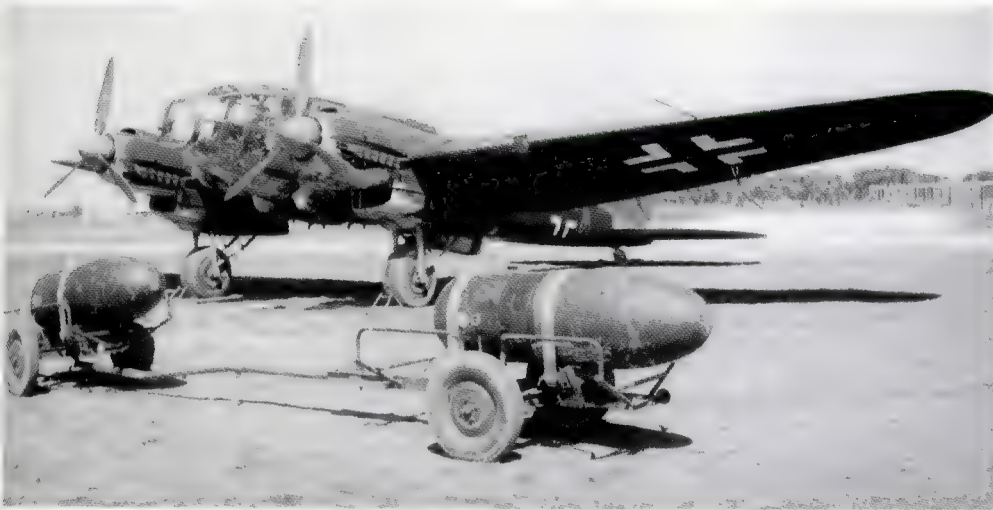
The success of the Condor was out of all proportion to the numbers involved and led the British to develop a number of counter-measures, some more far-fetched than others. Perhaps the most successful, although dangerous nonetheless, was the catapulting of a Hurricane fighter from the bow of a converted merchant ship. The only problem was that the fighter could not return to the ship and had either to ditch in the sea or find a land base if one was sufficiently close. The first success for such an arrangement came on 3 August 1941 when Lt. R. Everett destroyed a Condor (see page 138).

The Fw 200 also undertook a number of minelaying sorties but these were not as successful as its anti-shipping operations. The two large 1,000 kg (2,200 lb) LMB mines, carried under the outer wings of the aircraft, severely reduced its performance and resulted in heavy losses. On 20 July 1940, for example, two Condors were lost while flying minelaying sorties, one piloted by *Hptm.* Stesszyn. This was shot down by anti aircraft fire off Sunderland. Petersen pleaded that these sorties be discontinued, but it was not until he made a personal call to General Jeschonnek that permission was finally given to cease them.

During the first quarter of 1941, 1./KG 40 sank 171,000 GRT (gross registered tons) of shipping with bombs, including no fewer than nine vessels in a concentrated attack on 26 February. From then on, however, the low-level attacks flown by the Condors became more and more hazardous due to the various counter-measures which had been developed. The aircraft then took to hiding in the clouds, emerging only to drop their bombs, now released at a higher level than previously, before making off. These tactics obviously proved less successful, and by early 1942 British defences had improved to such an extent that low level-attacks were abandoned altogether. The Condor was then restricted to



ABOVE: Hans Joachim 'Hajo' Herrmann was born on 1 August 1913 in Kiel, being awarded the *Ritterkreuz* on 13 October 1940 for his service as a bomber pilot with KG 4 and as Kapitän of 7./KG 30. During 1942 he was transferred to the Luftwaffenführungsstab and in 1943 he developed the *Wilde Sau* method of free lance night fighting, forming the first such unit, later known as JG 300. Towards the end of the war, he created *Rammkommando Elbe*, a unit charged with bringing down a bomber on each mission no matter what the cost. After the war, he spent many years in Russian captivity.

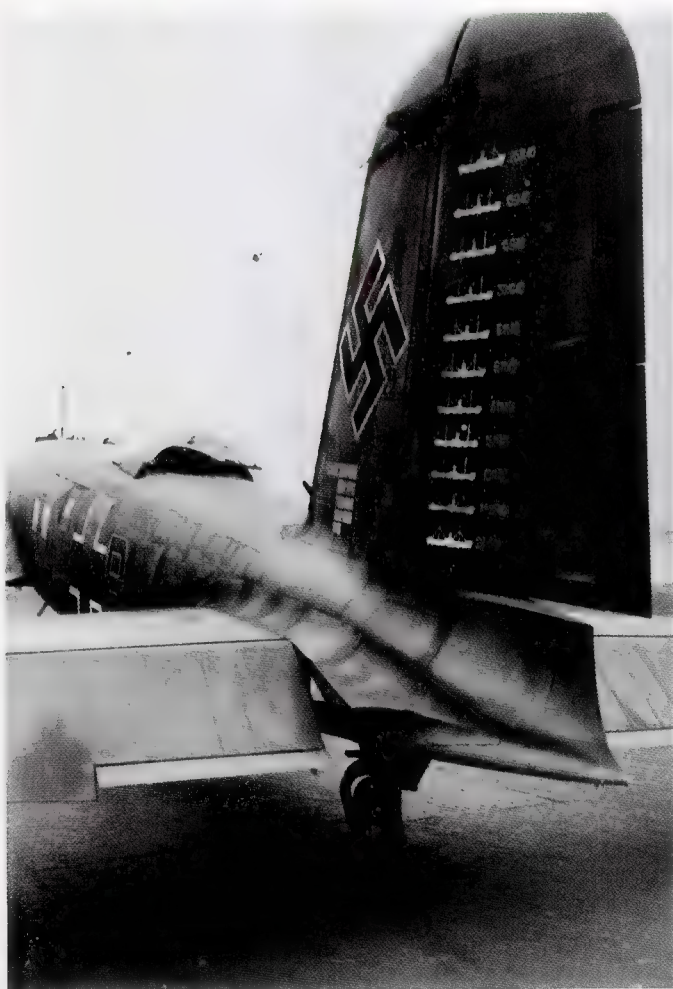


LEFT: Several Luftwaffe bomber units undertook minelaying sorties around the British Isles during the period from July 1940 to late 1941. Apart from the dedicated minelaying Gruppe, KGr 126 (later redesignated I./KG 28) the other main unit to undertake these missions was KG 26. Here mines are being readied for loading aboard an He 111 of one of these units' aircraft which has temporary black undersurfaces.

RIGHT: In the harsh freezing conditions that prevailed in northern Norway and Finland, take-off and landing accidents occurred frequently. The port undercarriage leg of this He 111 apparently collapsed just as the aircraft completed its landing run.



LEFT: A Luftwaffe pilot of KG 30 is congratulated on completing a record number of sorties by the presentation of a laurel wreath.



LEFT: The tail of the Fw 200 C piloted by Hptm. Edmund Daser, Staffelkapitän of 1./KG 40 and, in February 1941, one of the most successful Condor pilots. Forty-five white vertical bars, representing the total number of missions which Daser's crew had then flown over Britain were painted on the fin together with the legend 'ENGLAND'. The rudder bears a silhouette of the ships which the crew claimed to have sunk, together with the date of the action. These ranged from 25 August 1940 to 28 February 1941. Daser was awarded the Ritterkreuz on 21 February 1941 and the following day a Wehrmacht communiqué announced that up to then his Staffel had sunk 145,200 BRT of shipping, of which 57,000 BRT was credited to Daser himself. On 29 June 1942, Daser, then a Major, was awarded the Deutsche Kreuz in Gold for his exploits.



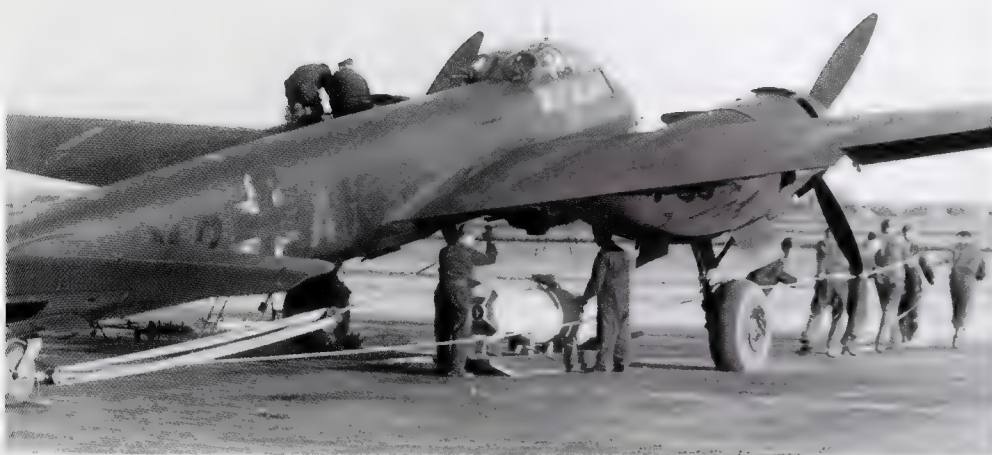
ABOVE: This Fw 200 C-3 of 1./KG 40 carries the standard camouflage scheme of the 1941 period with its unit marking, F8+GH, painted on both sides of the fuselage and repeated beneath the wings. The Geschwader code 'F8' appeared below the port wing in black while the individual aircraft letter 'G' and Staffel letter 'H' were applied beneath the starboard wing in white and black respectively. The individual letter painted on the sides of the fuselage was outlined in white.



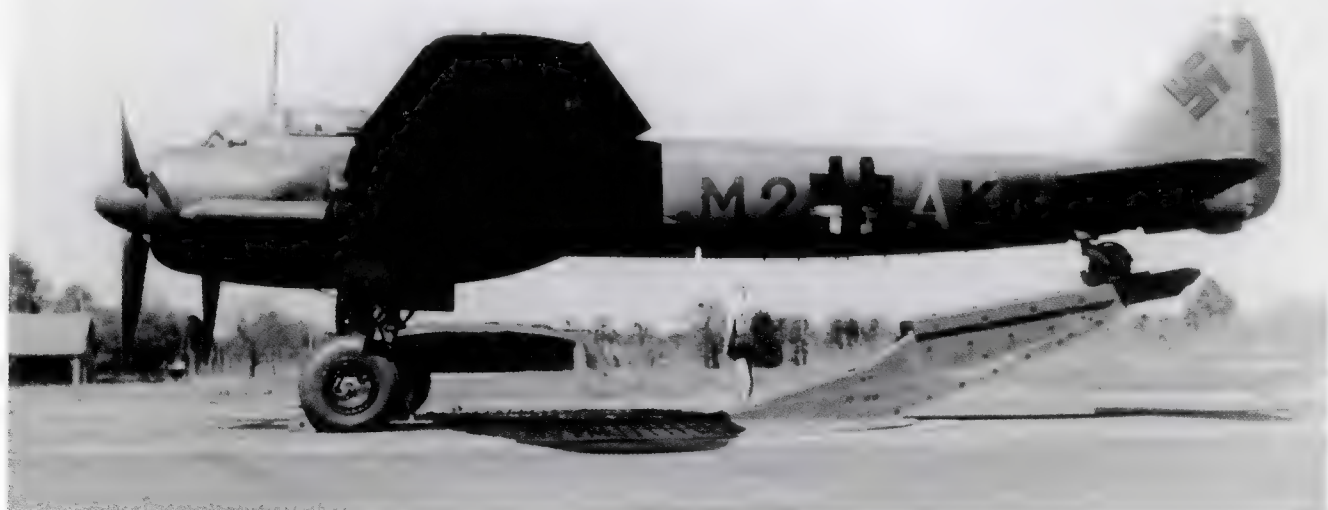
ABOVE: The IV.(Ergänzungs) Gruppe of KG 40 was formed at Orleans-Bricey in mid-1941. This early production Fw 200 C-1, F8+BW of 12./KG 40, has dark sea green (RLM 72) and dark green (RLM 73) uppersurfaces with pale blue (RLM 65) beneath. The individual aircraft letter 'B' was outlined in white.



ABOVE: For long periods in 1941 and the first half of 1942, KG 30's Ju 88s operated from bases in Norway against the Arctic convoys attempting to transport aircraft, armament and supplies from Britain and the United States to the Soviet Union. This line-up, showing three aircraft from the unit, is typical of the camouflage and markings carried during this time.

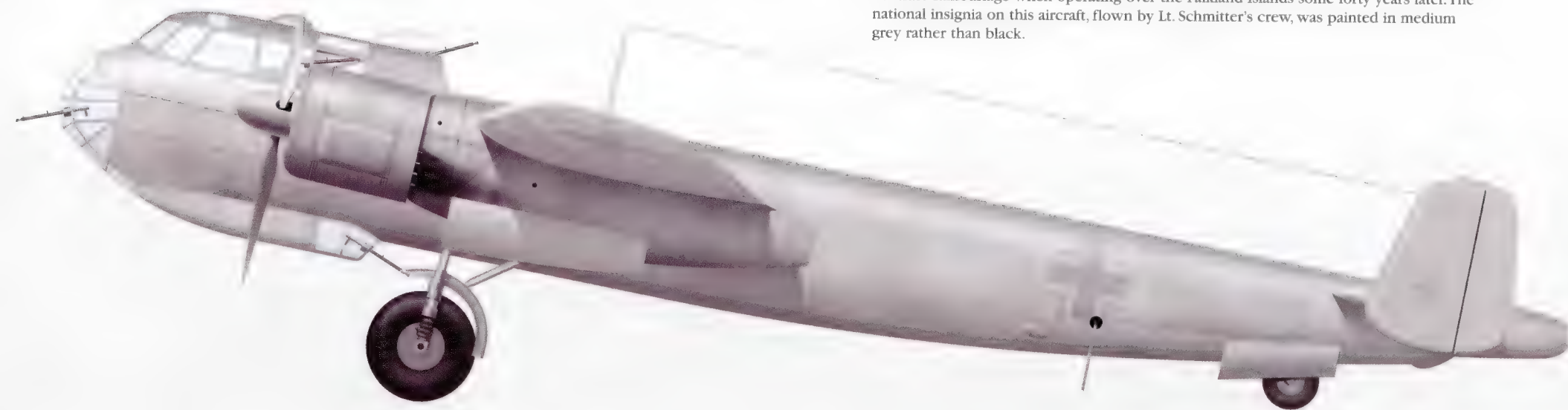


LEFT AND BELOW: Kampfgruppe 106 was formed from Küstenfliegergruppe 106 in May 1941 under the command of Hptm. Wolfgang Schlenkhoff. In these two views of a Ju 88 A-4 of 2./KG 106 being prepared for a sortie, it can be seen that its national insignia have been largely obliterated by temporary black paint but the code, M2+AK, with the individual letter 'A' in red, remains intact. In the photograph (*LEFT*) ground crew are manually hauling a bomb aboard the aircraft using a system of pulleys. The photograph (*BELOW*) shows the aircraft on a compass swinging platform.





ABOVE AND ABOVE LEFT: Some of the first Do 217 Es delivered to KG 40 were painted pale grey overall. This colour even covered the spinners, propeller blades and fans of the BMW 801 engines, and was almost certainly adopted to give much better camouflage during maritime operations. Royal Navy Sea Harrier jet fighters adopted a similar low-contrast camouflage when operating over the Falkland Islands some forty years later. The national insignia on this aircraft, flown by Lt. Schmitter's crew, was painted in medium grey rather than black.



Dornier Do 217 E-1 of II./KG 40, Autumn 1941

It is interesting to note that the Luftwaffe experimented with low contrast grey camouflage long before British forces introduced a similar finish for its aircraft during the Falklands campaign in 1982. This particular aircraft has no unit markings, but some aircraft carried these in white on the outer surfaces of the tailfins.

attacking from a higher altitude using the *Lotfe* 7H bombsight, or acting as a spotter aircraft for approaching U-boats.

The departure of the majority of German bomber units for the East in June 1941 meant that nearly all the *Gruppen* then remaining in the West were engaged on anti-shipping sorties. These were I./KG 26, I., II. and III./KG 30, I./KG 40, KGr 106, KGr 506 and KGr 606. The old Kü.Fl.Gr.106 had been renamed KGr 106 in May 1941 after it was re-equipped with the Ju 88. Later, on 19 October 1941, having re-equipped with the Ju 88 in March 1941, Kü.Fl.Gr.506 became known as KGr 506. Both units retained their original codes 'M2' and 'S4' respectively. Most of these units were assigned to *Fliegerführer Atlantik* which had been formed on 31 March 1941 under the anti-shipping expert, *Gen.Maj.* Martin Harlinghausen. The purpose of his command was to co-ordinate operations in support of the German blockade around the British Isles. These included striking at merchant shipping bringing urgently needed supplies to the beleaguered island and supporting operations by the U-boat arm. Still prominent amongst Harlinghausen's units were the Fw 200s of I./KG 40 which were now joined by the He 111s of III./KG 40, which had been formed from I./KG 1 on 24 March 1941 at Brest-Lanveoc.

Despite its much reduced strength, the forces assigned to *Fliegerführer Atlantik* were able to complete the following number of sorties during the second half of 1941:

Month	Anti-shipping		Minelaying	Total
	Day	Night		
Jul 1941	171	290	123	584
Aug 1941	227	261	111	599
Sep 1941	133	259	319	711
Oct 1941	126	249	293	668
Nov 1941	207	259	345	811
Dec 1941	99	157	385	641
Total	963	1,475	1,576	4,014

A new weapon was added to the armoury of the anti-shipping force late in 1941 in the shape of the air-launched torpedo. During the summer of 1941, Harlinghausen sent a few crews from I./KG 40 for torpedo training at Grossenbrode, its first such operation being flown on 30 December when all three 'fish' missed their target. It was quickly realised that the Condor was a far from ideal platform from which to launch torpedoes but it did lead to the weapon being used by the He 111s of KG 26 from April 1942, and later by the Ju 88s of KG 30.



LEFT: Two mechanics carry a cylinder, used to top up the on-board oxygen supply, towards a Focke-Wulf 200 of 7./KG 40. This Condor carries the standard camouflage pattern of RLM 72 and 73 with the code F8+CR in black and the individual letter 'C' edged in white. On many Fw 200s the fuselage Balkenkreuz had narrow white outlines.

Luftwaffe Bomber Units in the West, 16 August 1941**Luftflotte 3****General der Flieger Hugo Sperrle Paris**

II. Gruppe/KG 2	Do 17 Z, Do 217 E	Major Johannes Hübner	Evreux	18	(8)
Stab/KG 30	Ju 88 A, He 111 H	Major Erich Bloedorn	Evreux	2	(2)
I. Gruppe/KG 30	Ju 88 A	Hptm. Lau	St. André (to Stavanger later in the month)	33	(16)
III. Gruppe/KG 30	Ju 88 A	Major Schumann	Gilze-Rijen	34	(20)

Fliegerführer Atlantik**Gen.Maj Martin Harlinghausen**

I. Gruppe/KG 40	Fw 200	Hptm. Edmund Daser	Bordeaux-Merignac	28	(10)
II. Gruppe/KG 40	Do 217 E	Hptm. Wendt Freiherr von Schlippenbach	Cognac (less 4.Staffel)	24	(3)
III. Gruppe/KG 40	He 111 H	Hptm. Robert Kowalewski	Bordeaux-Merignac	20	(6)
KGr 106	Ju 88 A	Major Friedrich Schallmeyer	Amsterdam-Schipol (less 1.Staffel)	14	(6)
2. Staffel/KGr 506	Ju 88 A	(unknown)	Westerland	9	(4)
KGr 606	Ju 88 A	Obstlt. Joachim Hahn	Lannion	20	(8)

Lorient**Luftflotte 5****Generaloberst Hans Stumpff****Oslo****IV.Fliegerkorps****Generalleutnant Kurt Pflugbeil****Beauvais**

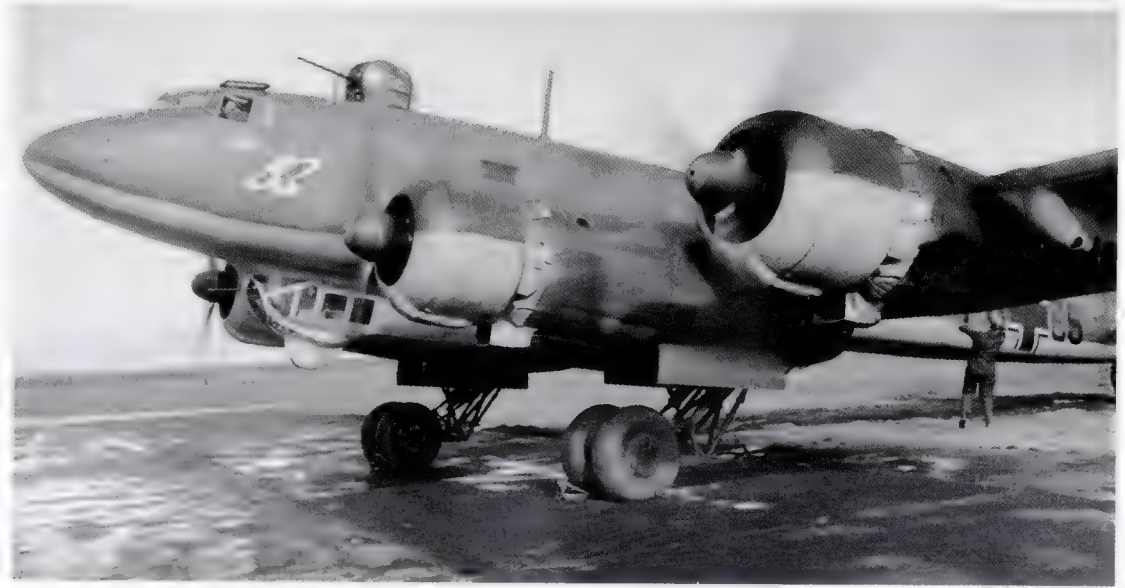
I. Gruppe/KG 30	Ju 88 A	Major Horst von Riesen	Banak (4. & 5./KG 30 only)	-	(16)
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Fliegerführer Nord**Generalleutnant Alexander Holle****Stavanger**

I. Gruppe/KG 26	He 111 H	Major Hermann Busch	Aalborg West & Stavanger-Sola	-	(18)
6. Staffel/KG 30	Ju 88 A	(unknown)	Stavanger-Sola	-	(7)



RIGHT AND OPPOSITE PAGE: With all four engines running, an Fw 200 prepares for take-off from its home base at Bordeaux-Mérignac. This aircraft, coded F1+CS of 8./KG 40, has its individual letter 'C' outlined in red and has red tips to its spinners. The III. Gruppe of the Geschwader did not begin to receive the type until early 1942, but even at that time, a large proportion of the unit's Focke-Wulfs had a modified version of the old style fuselage Balkenkreuz with narrow white outlines.



Focke-Wulf Fw 200 C-1 of 8./KG 40, August 1941

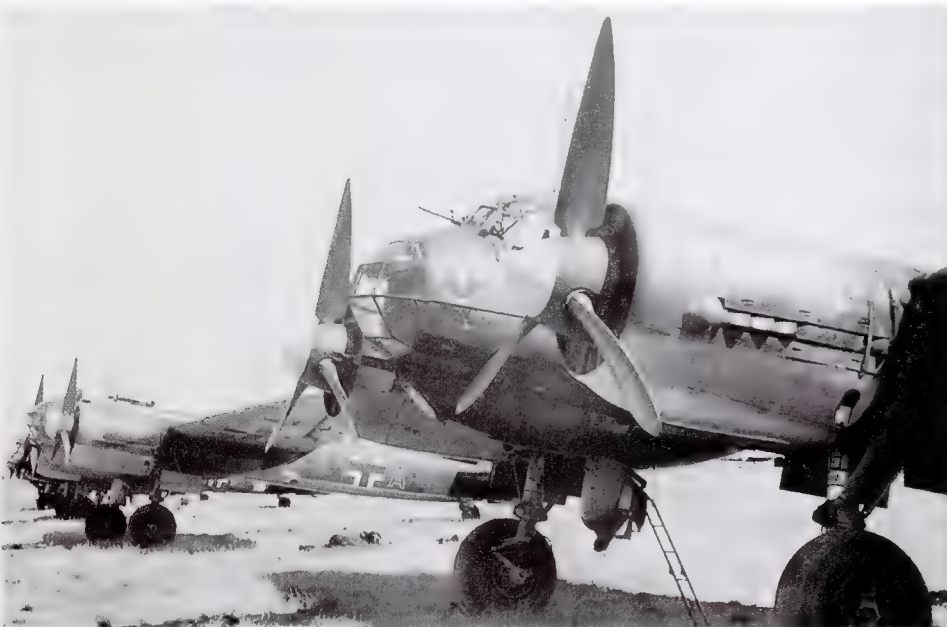
Around this time III./KG 40 began to exchange its He 111s for Fw 200s. One of the most unusual features of KG 40's Fw 200s was the painting of oversize black areas to the fuselage Balkenkreuz. The Staffel operated the Condor until March 1943 when it began to re-equip with the He 177 at Fassberg. The aircraft is finished in the subtly different uppersurface colours of dark greens 72 and 73.



LEFT AND ABOVE: Refuelling an Fw 200 C-4 anti-shipping aircraft of I./KG 40 at Bordeaux-Mérignac. All aircraft of KG 40 carried the 'world-in-a-ring' badge on both sides of the fuselage nose.



BELOW: This line-up of Ju 88 A-4s of 3./KG 506 carry the Staffel badge below the cockpit which featured a ram's head painted white on a two-tone brown shield. The second aircraft carries the code S4+AL on the fuselage with the individual letter 'A' outlined in yellow. This letter was also repeated beneath each wing, outboard of the Balkenkreuz, in black.

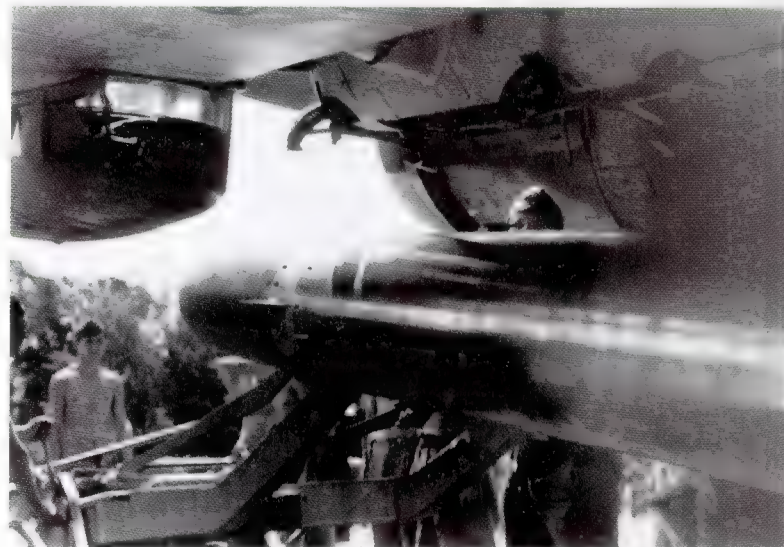


ABOVE: The badge of 1./KG 506 comprised three black and white birds flying above a medium blue sea on a pale blue shield. Kampfgruppe 506 was formed from the coastal reconnaissance unit Küstenfliegergruppe 506 on 19 October 1941 although it had exchanged its He 115 floatplanes for Ju 88s at Perleberg in March. Its first Kommandeur was Obstlt. Walter Schwarz.

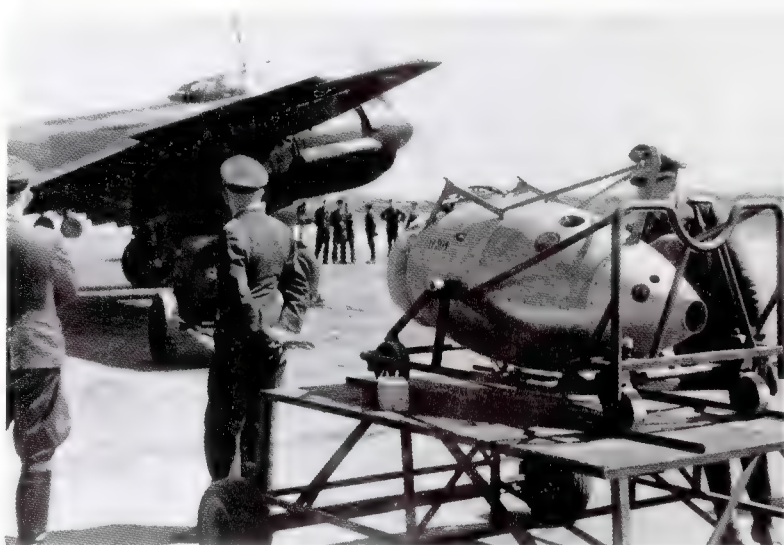


ABOVE: Late in 1941 Luftwaffe anti-shipping aircraft gained a new weapon when the air-launched torpedo was introduced into service. This Ju 88 carries two such weapons under the wing centre section.

RIGHT: KGr 506 personnel watch as one of their Ju 88s prepares to take off. The object in the foreground is a 500 kg (1,100 lb) thrust Walter 109-500 rocket-assisted take-off engine to improve the take-off performance when carrying such heavy weapons as torpedoes.



ABOVE: To assist Luftwaffe mechanics to load heavy torpedoes aboard the racks of its carrying aircraft, in this case a Ju 88, a special hydraulic truck was developed.



BELOW: This photograph shows a Ju 88 A-4 with Walter 109-500 rocket engines mounted beneath each wing belonging to 1./KGr 506, S4+AH, and carries the unit's badge described opposite.



ABOVE: A close-up of the Walter rocket-assisted take-off engine mounted below the wing of Ju 88 of 3./KGr 506, S4+UL. This aircraft has its individual letter outlined in yellow.

The Struggle for the Mediterranean

January-December 1941

"The most dramatic event I remember was our attempt to sink the battleship HMS Queen Elizabeth which had been spotted in dry dock at Alexandria undergoing repairs. We took off from Heraklion in Crete carrying a 2,500 kg armour-piercing bomb, requiring full throttle to climb to 2,000 m. Then I discovered that the second stage of one of the superchargers had failed, so we only managed to get to 2,500 m before reaching Alexandria. The flak was at its best, but I managed to keep the aircraft steady for over two minutes so that my navigator could aim the bomb. After release nothing happened which could have resembled a detonation and I realised that my bomb aimer had forgotten to activate the fuse. Instead of putting the Queen Elizabeth into trouble, we were getting blasted by the flak. I had lost quite a chunk of our right aileron and, just between my legs, I discovered a leak in the hydraulics which meant that the undercarriage had extended. To top it all the port Jumo 211 engine was overheating due to a radiator leak. My only chance of escaping the Admiralty 'watering cans' was to make a steep dive down to sea level and try to disappear into the darkness. After a struggle we managed to manually return the wheels to where they belonged and began the long, single-engined, flight home. Because there was no possibility of climbing above the mountains of Crete to return to our home base of Heraklion, we eventually made a forced landing at Réthimnon in the south of the island."

Werner Muffey, pilot with *Führungskette/X. Fliegerkorps*, flying an He 111 H-4, P4+AA, 1941.

Due to Mussolini's problems in Greece and North Africa, Hitler was obliged to come to the aid of his Fascist ally late in December 1940. His assistance involved the dispatch of two panzer divisions to North Africa and the transfer of the specialised anti-shipping unit, X. *Fliegerkorps* under *Generalleutnant* Hans Geisler, from Norway to Sicily. News that a large British convoy was on its way to Alexandria via Malta hastened the transfer, and by 10 January 1941, the following bomber units from X. *Fliegerkorps* had become operational in Sicily.

Stab/LG 1	Ju 88 A	Catania	4	(2)
II. Gruppe/LG 1	Ju 88 A	Catania	38	(38)
III. Gruppe/LG 1	Ju 88 A	Catania	38	(38)
2. Staffel/KG 4	He 111 H	Comiso	12	(12)
II. Gruppe/KG 26	He 111 H	Comiso	37	(29)



LEFT: A pair of He 111 fuselages under construction at the Heinkel factory at Oranienburg. Black green (RLM 70) and dark green (RLM 71) camouflage and national insignia have already been applied as have their Werknummern, 4669 and 4670.



ABOVE AND RIGHT: Two more photographs of He 111 H-6 fuselages under construction, this time before the national insignia have been applied. All He 111s built at the Oranienburg factory during the first half of the war had their Stammkennzeichen four letter call signs painted white.





LEFT: Two Ju 88 A-4s of II./LG 1 under Hptm. Arved Crüger, photographed in Sicily. The second aircraft, L1+KN of 5./LG 1, has a white rear fuselage band rather crudely painted around its Geschwader code 'L1'.

One of the first operations by the bomber force was flown on the 10th when 18 He 111s from II./KG 26 under *Major* Helmut Bertram attacked a British convoy, spearheaded by the aircraft carrier *Illustrious* and the battleships *Warspite* and *Valiant*. This failed to sink any vessels, but two hours later 13 Ju 87s from II./St.G 2 managed to hit *Illustrious* with six 500 kg bombs and all but sank the carrier. She then limped back towards Valetta in Malta where she was again attacked by 14 aircraft from II./KG 26, but although these failed to further harm the ship, some damage was, however, caused to harbour installations.

After being reinforced by the Ju 88 A-4s of III./KG 30 under *Major* Schumann which had arrived at Gerbini in Sicily, the *Luftwaffe* then turned its attentions to the bombing of Malta. The island was first attacked on 16 January when 17 Ju 88s attempted to finish off the *Illustrious* in Valetta harbour. Although the carrier was hit four times in this and a further attack on the 19th, she was saved from sinking by her armoured deck. Heavy anti-aircraft fire resulted in the destruction of at least five Ju 88s.

The next major raid on Malta was made on 26 February when 12 Ju 88s and ten He 111s attacked the island's airfields, destroying six Wellington bombers and damaging a further seven. Further attacks were flown on 1 March, when 60 bombers succeeded in destroying four aircraft on the ground at Hal Far, and on the 23rd when heavy attacks were flown against Convoy MW 6 which had just arrived at Valetta under Royal Navy escort. These and other attacks forced the RAF to withdraw all its bomber and anti-shipping aircraft from the island, severely curtailing her ability to strike at Axis shipping in the Mediterranean.

Meanwhile the focus was switching to events in the Balkans. As mentioned earlier, Mussolini had suffered reverses in Greece as well as in North Africa. For years tension had existed between Italy and Greece over the Aegean Islands, and following the Italian annexation of Albania in 1939, this gradually increased. Finally, on 29 October 1940, Mussolini's troops invaded Greece from Albania but, despite their technological superiority, their advance was halted within two days. The Greeks then counter-attacked, driving their would-be invaders back into Albania.

The winter brought a stalemate during which Britain's pledge to support Greece was reinforced when small detachments of British troops landed on the island of Crete. However, the fiercely independent Greek dictator, General Metaxas, resisted most other British offers of help as he feared the entry of more British and Commonwealth troops into Greece would antagonise the Germans, whose help he needed to secure some compromise with Italy. The possibility of a British presence in mainland Greece was, indeed, already a matter of deep concern to Hitler who, on 13 December 1940, issued his Directive No. 20 for Operation '*Marita*'. This suggested a possible German occupation of Greece to prevent 'the establishment of an air base which would threaten Italy in the first place and, incidentally, the Rumanian oil fields.'

RIGHT: Malta occupied a strategic position in the Mediterranean, providing a base from which RAF fighters and anti-shipping aircraft could strike against German supply lines to North Africa. Early in January 1941, the Ju 88s of II. and III./LG 1 moved to Catania in Sicily in an attempt to put the airfields on the island out of action. This aircraft, coded L1+FR of the 7. Staffel, still carries its European camouflage, with its individual letter 'F' painted in white on the fuselage sides. Note how part of the white 'F' which overlaps the white fuselage band has been repainted in black to make it visible.



Junkers Ju 88 A-5 of 7./LG 1, January 1941

The first Ju 88s of III./LG 1 arrived at Catania in Sicily in January 1941, transferring to Eleusis in Greece during May. At this time, the unit retained its European camouflage but it was later to adopt desert finish for operations in North Africa.



ABOVE: The Geschwader Stab of LG 1, under Obstdt. Friedrich-Karl Knust, also moved to Catania in early 1941. It is possible that this Ju 88, L1+AA, was his personal aircraft. It has the brighter yellow uppersurface colouring which was applied with paints from Italian stock. The unit code was applied in black to both sides of the fuselage with the individual letter in medium green (RLM 25). Beneath this marking traces of the original four letter call sign can still be seen.

Of the countries that bordered Greece to the north, Bulgaria and Albania were already part of the Axis and, on 25 March, the Yugoslavian Regent, Prince Paul, signed the Tripartite Pact in Vienna which would put them firmly under German influence. This only served to spark a military coup, particularly among the Serbs, who were fiercely anti-German, with the result that the young King Peter was put on the throne and the pact repudiated. This was the excuse that Hitler needed.

On 3 April 1941, he issued his Directive No. 26 which called for Rumania, Bulgaria and Hungary to support a German invasion of Yugoslavia and Greece. Three days later, the *Wehrmacht* struck.

On the first day of the invasion, 200 *Luftwaffe* bombers including Do 17s from KG 2 and III./KG 3 and the Ju 88s of KG 51, made a devastating air raid on Belgrade, the Yugoslav capital. Code named Operation 'Strafgericht' (Retribution), this and two further raids during the day caused considerable destruction in the city and over 1,000 deaths. Only two Do 17s were lost in the action. Elsewhere, the Yugoslavian army was being shattered in a classic *Blitzkrieg*, the fighter-bombers and dive-bombers of the *Luftwaffe* providing massive support. By the end of the day, a total of 47 fighters, 45 bombers and 50 reconnaissance aircraft from the Yugoslav Air Force had been destroyed. Continuing losses led to a rapid diminution of resistance, and on 17 April, eleven days after the invasion began, Yugoslavia surrendered.



ABOVE: While II. and III./LG 1 were still based in the central Mediterranean area, I./LG 1 moved from Austria to Krumovo in Bulgaria in March 1941 for operations against Greece and Yugoslavia. It then moved to Eleusis in southern Greece in May 1941 for the invasion of Crete. For both operations their aircraft had black green and dark green uppersurface camouflage. The Ju 88 in the foreground is L1+BK of 2./LG 1, the individual letter 'B' painted red outlined in white.

Luftwaffe Bomber Order of Battle for the Invasion of Greece and Yugoslavia, 5 April 1941

Luftflotte 4	General der Flieger Alexander Löhr		Wien (Austria)
Stab/KG 2	Do 17 Z-2 & 3	Gen.Major Herbert Rieckhoff	Wien-Zwölfaxing (Austria)
I. Gruppe/KG 2	Do 17 Z-2 & 3	Major Waldemar Lerche	Wien-Zwölfaxing (Austria)
III. Gruppe/KG 2	Do 17 Z-2 & 3	Major Friedrich Dreyer	Wien-Zwölfaxing (Austria)
III. Gruppe/KG 3	Do 17 Z-2 & 3	Major Wladimir Graowaes	Münchendorf (Austria)
Stab/KG 51	Ju 88 A	Major Hans Bruno Schulze-Heyn	Wiener Neustadt (Austria)
I. Gruppe/KG 51	Ju 88 A	Hptm. Heinrich Hahn	Wiener Neustadt (Austria)
II. Gruppe/KG 51	Ju 88 A	Hptm. Max Stadelmeier	Wiener Neustadt (Austria)
III. Gruppe/KG 51	Ju 88 A	Major Walter Marienfeld	Wien-Schwechat (Austria)
II. Gruppe/KG 4	He 111 P-4	Major Gottlieb Wolff	Wien-Aspern (Austria) minelayers
VIII. Fliegerkorps	Generaloberst Wolfram Freiherr von Richthofen		Gorna Dumaja (Bulgaria)
I. Gruppe/LG 1	Ju 88 A-4	Hptm. Kuno Hoffmann	Krumovo (Bulgaria)
X. Fliegerkorps	Generalleutnant Hans Geisler		Taormina (Sicily)
Stab/LG 1	Ju 88 A-4	Oberst Friedrich-Karl Knust	Catania (Sicily)
II. Gruppe/LG 1	Ju 88 A-4	Hptm. Arved Crüger	Catania (Sicily)
III. Gruppe/LG 1	Ju 88 A-4	(unknown)	Catania (Sicily)
2. Staffel/KG 4	He 111 P	(unknown)	Comiso (Sicily)
II. Gruppe/KG 26	He 111 H	Hptm. Robert Kowalewski	Comiso (Sicily)
III. Gruppe/KG 30	Ju 88 A-4	Major Schumann	Gerbini (Sicily)



ABOVE: The code 'IT' was originally allocated to the specialised minelaying Gruppe, KGr 126. In December 1940, this unit was redesignated I./KG 28, becoming the third III./KG 26 on 15 December 1941 (see KG 28 family tree on page 117). Shortly after this, it re-equipped with the Ju 88 A-4 and transferred to the Mediterranean theatre. It still retained the 'IT' code for a short time as can be seen in this photo of IT+ZD of the III. Gruppe Stab of KG 26. The individual letter 'Z' was probably painted bright green (RLM 25).

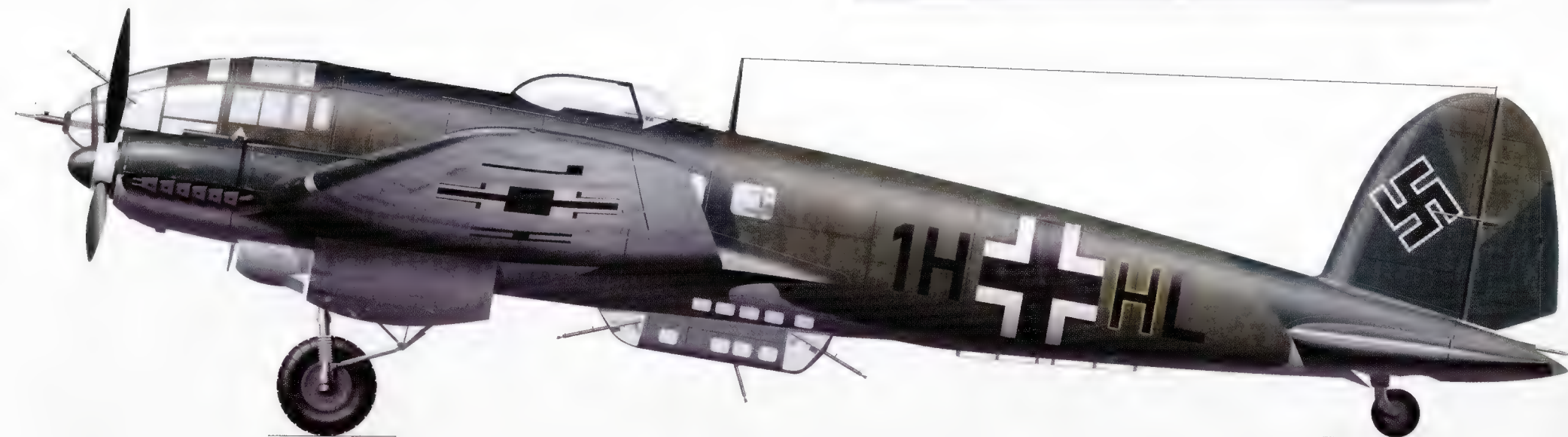
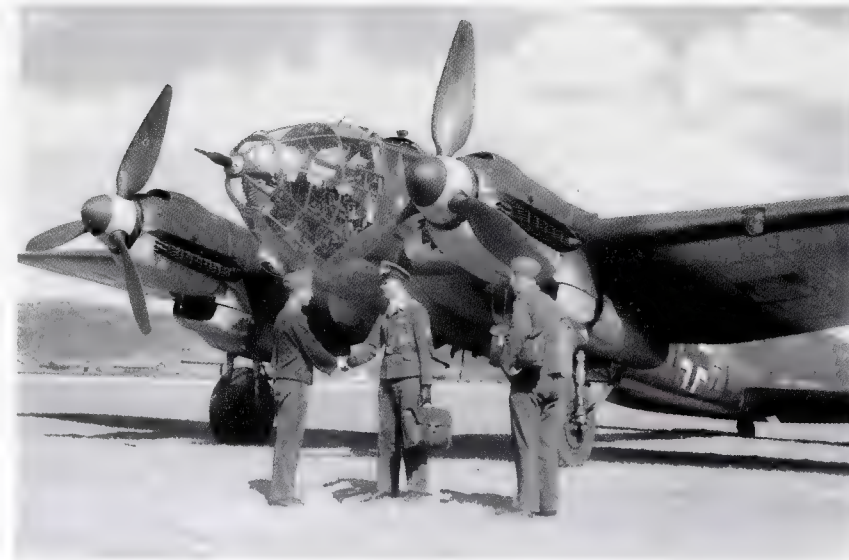


ABOVE: An He 111 of 5./KG 26 possibly photographed during the first campaign against the island fortress of Malta during the late winter and early spring of 1941. The aircraft has its full unit code painted below the wings '1H' beneath the starboard and 'DN' beneath the port, all in black. The white rear fuselage band was common to aircraft operating on the Mediterranean front.

BELOW: Relatively few He 111s operated in the Mediterranean theatre. This aircraft, which has desert tan (RLM 79) uppersurfaces still carries its four letter code, ?O+JQ in black. The red spinners had a white central stripe.



RIGHT: An officer from 3./KG 26 greets his senior mechanic prior to undertaking another mission. This He 111 H-6, which has the code 1H+HL painted in black with the 'H' outlined in yellow, has its uppersurfaces painted in the standard Luftwaffe bomber camouflage colours of black green and dark green. The black green spinners have wide white bands.



Heinkel He 111 H-6 of 3./KG 26, Summer 1941

The Löwengeschwader (Lion Wing) KG 26 mainly flew anti-shipping operations from Norwegian, French and Mediterranean bases. At this time the unit carried Luftwaffe camouflage for the period. The spinners had a white band painted around their centre, indicating the I.Gruppe, while the individual letter 'H' was outlined in yellow indicating the 3.Staffel.

January-December 1941

While Yugoslavia was being savagely assaulted, German operations were also taking place against Greece. These began with some aerial skirmishing during the morning and afternoon of 6 April, mainly involving *Luftwaffe* fighter-bombers which had been detailed to support troop movements. A major success came later in the day when some 20 Ju 88s from III./KG 30 took off from Gerbini in Sicily to attack the port of Piraeus with bombs and mines. The attack was led at low level by *Hptm.* Hajo Herrmann, *Kapitän* of 7./KG 30. Just after dropping his bombs from 1,000 m (3,000 ft), the sky suddenly lit up as if it was broad daylight. At least three bombs had hit the vessel *Clan Fraser* which still had 250 tons of TNT on board and, at around 03.15 hrs, she blew up. This explosion then destroyed another ammunition ship and two lighters also carrying munitions. In all the blast sank a total of 11 ships and devastated the port. Windows in Athens, 11 km (7 miles) away, were smashed and the explosion was still audible 240 km (150 miles) from the port. Admiral Cunningham, commander of the Mediterranean Fleet, later described it as "a shattering blow."

Despite spirited resistance by Greek troops, tanks from the German XVII. *Armee Gruppe* entered Salonika on 9 April. Bad weather prevented many aerial operations during this and the previous days, but early in the morning of the 11th, Ju 88s from III./KG 30 and He 111s from 2./KG 4 attempted to lay mines at the entrance to Volos harbour. This time they were met by RAF Hurricanes from 33 Squadron which shot down two Ju 88s, 4D+JR and 4D+FS, from III./KG 30. The following day, *Luftwaffe* bombers sank the freighter, *SS Retriever* off Phleves.

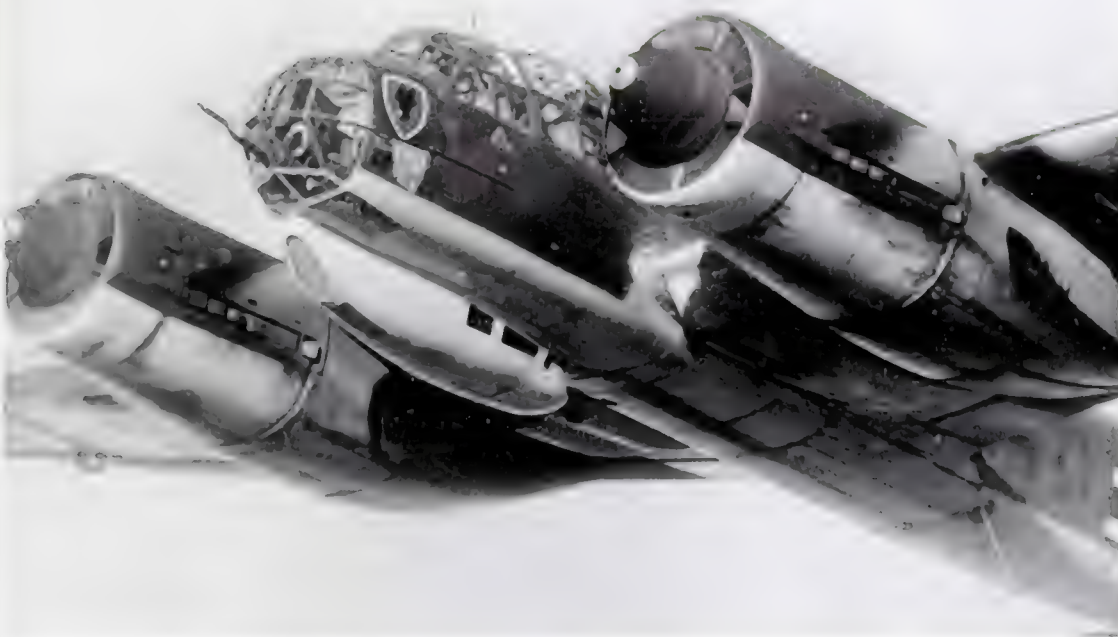
The weather improved at last on 13 April, enabling *Luftwaffe* bombers to virtually destroy the port of Volos in addition to a freighter and a tanker. Two Ju 88s, L1+UH and L1+EN, from LG 1 were lost in the attacks, the first again to 33 Squadron. Next day Lt. Georg Sattler bombed a 6,000 ton freighter in Piraeus harbour, throwing it against the already shattered quayside. Despite the fact that the battle was going badly for the Allies, the *Luftwaffe* did not have things all its own way and several of its bombers were lost on the following day. During an attack by 20 Ju 88s on Khalkis harbour, for example, I./KG 51 and I./LG 1 both lost an aircraft, but more notable was the loss of three aircraft from the *Geschwaderstab* of KG 2 – coded U5+BA, U5+DA and U5+GA – to Hurricanes of 80 Squadron during an attack on a factory near Eleusis. Next day 1./KG 2 lost another Do 17 Z, but this was the only German aircraft to be destroyed. On 18 April, the Ju 88, 9K+EK, with the *Kommandeur* of I./KG 51, *Hptm.* Heinrich Hahn on board, was shot down by a Hurricane, but he survived. Next day several German attacks were made on Athens, KG 2 losing five Do 17s and I./LG 1 two Ju 88s shot down.

BELOW: This early attack carried out on Piraeus harbour by Ju 87 dive bombers caused relatively little damage, but during the night of 6/7 April, the freighter *Clan Fraser* containing 250 tons of explosives, was bombed by *Hptm.* Hajo Herrmann flying a Ju 88 of 7./KG 30 which completely destroyed the vessel and wrecked the harbour and ten other ships.

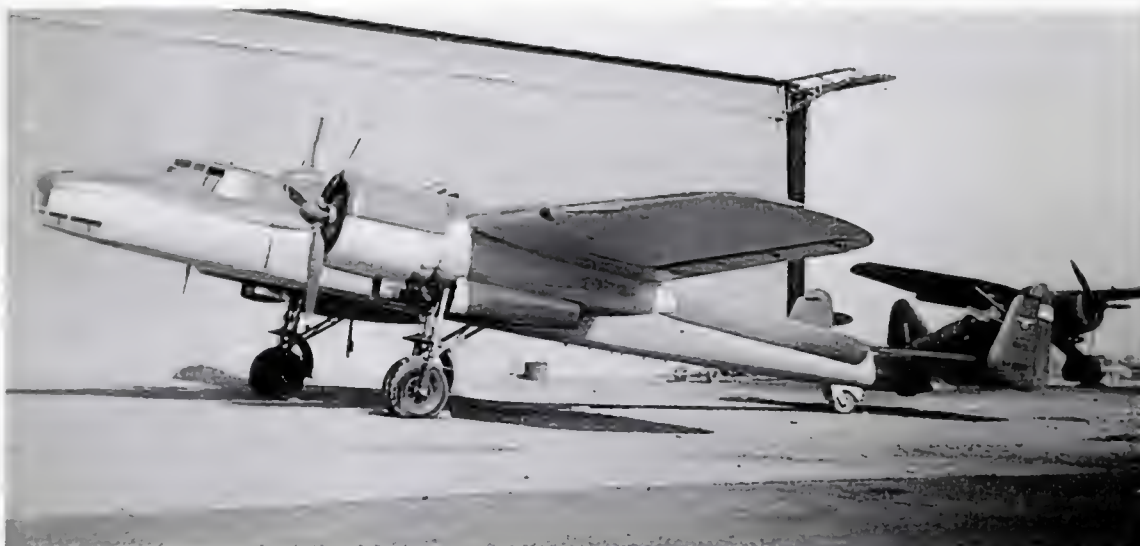


RIGHT: A Kette of Do 17 Zs of III./KG 2 in flight over Athens, carrying the familiar diagonal white stripe of the unit on their noses. These aircraft formed part of the victory parade staged over the city on 3 May 1941.





LEFT: This in-flight close-up of a Ju 88 A-4 of II./KG 30 shows the badge of the III. Gruppe, a black diving eagle on a yellow shield edged in white, painted on the fuselage nose. Behind this can be seen the bright yellow 87 octane triangle and, behind the wing trailing edge, the Geschwader code, '4D'. In this photograph the division between the black green (RLM 70) and dark green (RLM 71) upper surface camouflage is plainly visible.



RIGHT: Impressed by the performance of the Do 17, Yugoslavia produced a licence-built version of the aircraft known as the Do 17 Ka-1 which was similar to the Do 17 M but had a different nose and was powered by two French 980 hp Gnôme-Rhône radial engines. No fewer than 26 of the 70 or so Do 17s in service with the Yugoslav 3rd Bomber Wing were destroyed when Germany invaded on 6 April 1941. The remaining aircraft carried out strafing attacks on German troop movements, but few survived and on 19 April, two machines were flown to Egypt by escaping Yugoslav personnel. One of these aircraft, apparently unmarked apart from the Yugoslav red, white and blue bars on the rudder, is shown here with an RAF Lysander reconnaissance aircraft in the background.



LEFT: A Yugoslavian-built Do 17 Ka-1, this time with its country's red, white and blue national insignia applied beneath the wings.

LEFT: The Ju 88s of III./LG 1 made several night attacks against targets in North Africa while operating from their bases in Sicily. For these missions the undersurfaces of the Gruppe's aircraft usually had temporary black paint applied, as in this example which was captured by the RAFAs in Western Europe, temporary black paint was often also used to dull down the white portions of the national insignia and unit markings.



More damaging attacks were flown against Athens on 20 and 21 April, forcing British forces to hasten their preparations for an evacuation to Crete. On the 22nd, Fairy Fulmars from *HMS Furious* shot down a Ju 88 from III./LG 1 as the *Gruppe* attempted to make for the carrier. A Do 17 Z, 5K+DS, from 8./KG 3 was then shot down near Corinth. A third attack, by over 20 Dorniers and a similar number of Ju 88s, destroyed a number of Hurricanes on the ground at Argos. Evacuation of British troops from Greece began on 24 April, but five of the transport vessels were sunk by *Luftwaffe* bombers. Only one aircraft, a Ju 88, L1+KH of I./LG 1, was lost when it was shot down by a Blenheim. Attempts to prevent the evacuation continued on the next day, Ju 88s from I./LG 1 sinking three ships, including one by Lt. Gerhard Stamp.³ Very early in the morning of 26 April, I./KG 51 carried out a high level attack on Allied positions around the Corinth Canal and on the 27th German troops occupied Athens. Axis operations in Greece finally ended in success on the last day of April. Although the *Luftwaffe* bomber force lost 34 Ju 88s, 29 Do 17s and an He 111, it contributed an enormous amount to the success of the campaign.

BELOW: A Ju 88 with a two-third segment of its spinners painted black green, the remaining segment white. The aircraft in the background are Italian Macchi C.202 fighters which often escorted the German bombers.



RIGHT: A Ju 88 A-4 of 2./LG 1 with camouflage of desert tan (RLM 79) uppersurfaces and dark green (RLM 80) mottling. The undersides were painted sky blue (RLM 78). When the Staffel first transferred to the theatre in 1941, some of its aircraft adopted brighter yellow uppersurface camouflage using Italian paints. The individual letter of the aircraft shown here, L1+RK, was painted red over the white rear fuselage band.

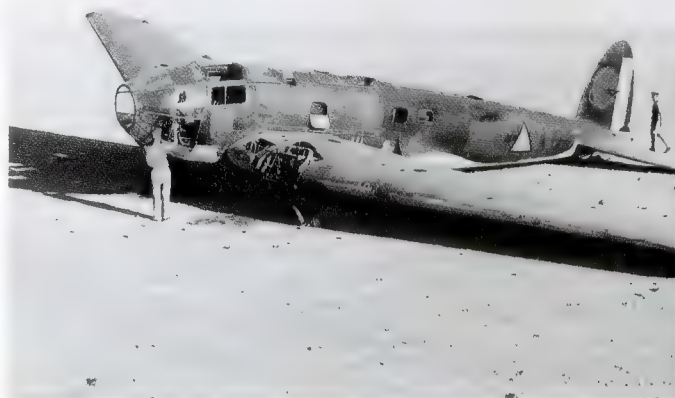


At the same time as the battle for Greece, an interesting operation was taking place in Iraq. Since just after the end of the First World War, Britain and Iraq had enjoyed good relations, the former helping Iraq to achieve its independence in 1924. These relations, firstly with King Faysal and then with his son King Ghazi, remained good until the death of the latter in a car accident in 1939.

Much of the infrastructure in Iraq had been provided with British help, in return for which Britain was allowed to maintain a major air base at Habbaniya. Following the death of King Ghazi, his son Faysal II came to the throne, but as he was only four years old, his uncle, Emir 'Abd al-Ilah, was appointed regent. After war was declared in 1939 Iraq initially sided with Britain and the Iraqi Prime Minister, General Nuri, declared her non-belligerency. This even resulted in diplomatic relations with Germany being severed but, under the influence of Pan-Arab leaders, public opinion in Iraq changed radically after the fall of France and Iraq became especially hostile to Britain. The new Prime Minister, Rashid 'Ali al-Gaylani, then detached Iraq from the British alliance and placed his support behind an army mutiny.

On 30 April, these rebel Iraqi forces began to besiege at Habbaniya, prompting the British, worried that the rebellion might possibly result in loss of her own oil supplies, to send in further troops from Egypt. Rashid 'Ali al-Gaylani then openly appealed to Hitler who ordered, in his Directive No. 30, that 'the Luftwaffe is to afford support.'

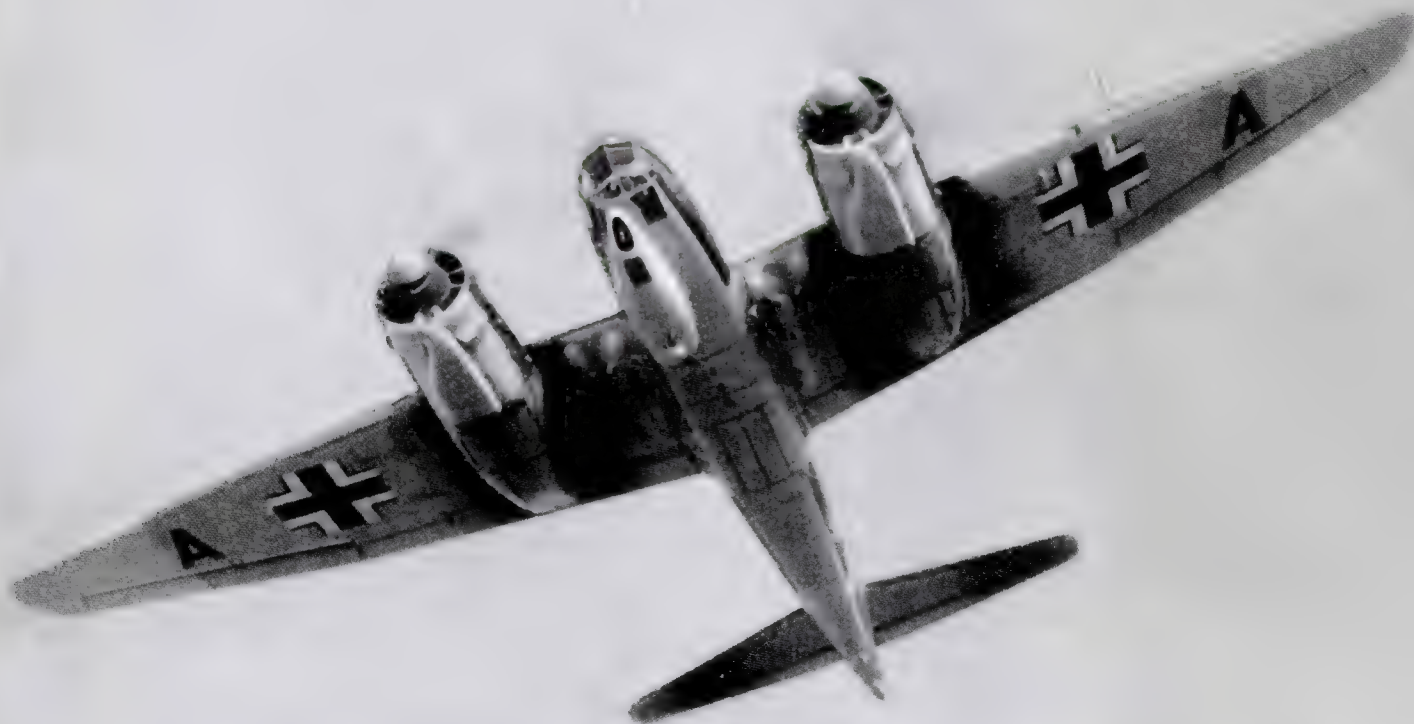
This resulted in the transfer to Mossul in Iraq of a small aerial force under *Oberst* Werner Junck comprising five He 111s from 4./KG 4, 14 Bf 110s from 4./ZG 76, some Ju 52/3ms and a Ju 90. Most aircraft of this force had desert sand uppersurfaces with pale blue beneath, and all had their German national insignia and any unit markings removed or painted over. The *Balkenkreuz* were replaced by Iraqi markings comprising a red symbol on a green triangle outlined in black, and the rudder of each aircraft was painted with green, white and black vertical stripes.



ABOVE: In addition to the Ju 90 V2, the Luftwaffe sent a Staffel of He 111 bombers from 4./KG 4 and another of Bf 110s from 4./ZG 76 to Iraq to support the rebels attempting to overthrow British rule. All these aircraft retained their Luftwaffe camouflage, but Iraqi markings were applied in place of German national insignia.

BELOW: A few Bf 110s, from 4./ZG 76 were also sent to assist the rebels fighting against British rule in Iraq. The colours of the fin and rudder are divided equally into green, white, red and black.





ABOVE: This Sicilian based Ju 88 A-4 of LG 1, has its individual letter 'A' painted beneath each wing, outboard of the Balkenkreuz. In common with most aircraft operating in the Mediterranean theatre it also had the undersurfaces of its wingtips painted white.

When the Germans arrived on 14 May, they found that the rebels besieging Habbaniya had already fled and that most of the Iraqi Air Force had been destroyed. Three He 111s did manage to make a damaging attack on the RAF base, but one was shot down by an RAF Gladiator. A few further operations were flown from Kirkuk against the Baghdad area, but on 29 May Junck's *Kommando* was forced to make a rapid withdrawal, abandoning all of its aircraft, now wrecked, in the desert. Two days later British troops entered Baghdad and Rashid 'Ali al-Gaylani fled via Turkey to Germany.

Germany now turned its attentions to the island of Crete which, after the evacuation of Greece, held about 32,000 British Commonwealth and 10,000 Greek troops. For the invasion of the island, code named Operation 'Merkur' (Mercury), the *Luftwaffe* proposed using the paratroops from *Generaloberst* Kurt Student's XI. *Fliegerkorps* embarked in some 500 Ju 52/3m transport aircraft, but before such an assault could begin, the island's air defences had to be neutralised.

Operations commenced on 3 May 1941 when 24 Ju 88s from LG 1 attacked airfields on the island. Defending Hurricanes claimed three shot down. Several more operations were then carried out over the following days targeting Allied shipping, and 5./KG 4 laid mines in Alexandria and the Suez Canal. By the evening of 19 May, preparations for the invasion of the island were complete. The air-landing operation began at dawn the next day when 53 DFS 230 troop-carrying gliders landed on Canea and Réthimnon. Fifteen minutes later the first wave of Ju 52/3ms arrived, dropping their paratroops around Maleme and Galatos. Simultaneously, Do 17s from KG 2 and He 111s from II./KG 26 struck at Allied strong-points to soften them up prior to the arrival of a second wave of transports, but the departure of the first Ju 52/3ms had caused dust clouds at the airfields which delayed the second wave of paratroops from taking off. By the time this second wave arrived over Réthimnon and the important airfield at Heraklion in mid-afternoon, the defences had recovered and in fierce fighting, which continued throughout the rest of the day, the German paratroops suffered heavy losses.

For the next few days the outcome of the fighting remained in the balance, *Luftwaffe* bombers being heavily engaged against the ships of the Royal Navy which had caused havoc among German reinforcements attempting to arrive by sea on 21 May. The next day the Ju 88s of I. and II./LG 1, some carrying 3,000 lb SC semi-armour-piercing bombs, supported by the Do 17s of KG 2 and the Ju 87s of St.G 2, struck back at the British force, sinking the cruisers *Gloucester* and *Fiji*, the destroyer *Greyhound* and damaging the battleships *Warspite* and *Valiant* as well as the cruisers *Naiad* and *Carlisle*. Three

Luftwaffe Bomber Order of Battle for the Attack on Crete, 19 May 1941

VIII. Fliegerkorps

Stab/KG 2	Do 17 Z-2 & 3
I. Gruppe/KG 2	Do 17 Z-2 & 3
II. Gruppe/KG 2	Do 17 Z-2 & 3
III. Gruppe/KG 2	Do 17 Z-2 & 3
III. Gruppe/KG 3	Do 17 Z-2 & 3
5. Staffel/KG 4	He 111 P-4
II. Gruppe/KG 26	He 111 H
Stab/LG 1	Ju 88 A-4
I. Gruppe/LG 1	Ju 88 A-4
II. Gruppe/LG 1	Ju 88 A-4
III. Gruppe/LG 1	Ju 88 A-4

X. Fliegerkorps

III. Gruppe/KG 30	Ju 88 A-4
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Generaloberst Wolfram Freiherr von Richthofen

Gen. Major Herbert Rieckhoff
 Major Waldemar Lerche
 Major Kurt Rohde
 Major Friedrich Dreyer
 Major Wladimir Graowaes
 (unknown)
 Hptm. W. Beyling
 Oberst Friedrich-Karl Knust
 Hptm. Kuno Hoffmann
 Hptm. Arved Crüger
 (unknown)

Generalleutnant Hans Geisler

Major Schumann

Athens-Neuphaleron

Athens-Tatoi (Greece)
 Athens-Tatoi (Greece)
 Athens-Tatoi (Greece)
 Athens-Tatoi (Greece)
 Athens-Tatoi (Greece)
 Gadurra (Rhodes) minelayers
 Eleusis (Greece)
 Eleusis (Greece)
 Eleusis (Greece)
 Eleusis (Greece)
 Eleusis (Greece)
 Eleusis (Greece)¹

Taormina (Sicily)

Gerbini (Sicily)

1. Parts of III./LG 1 were based at Derna in North Africa from June to October 1941.

RIGHT: A Ju 88 A-4 bomber fitted with engine flame dampers, belonging to KG 30 begins its take-off run from a Sicilian base. The aircraft has a most unusual uppersurface camouflage of desert sand (RLM 79) with dark green (RLM 80) applied in regular diagonal stripes. The badge of the II. Gruppe, a black diving eagle on a red shield, was painted beneath the cockpit.

BELOW: A line-up of Ju 88s of 3./LG 1. The first three aircraft all have different camouflage schemes, each reflecting different theatres of operation. The nearest machine still carries the standard European camouflage greens of RLM 70 and RLM 71 uppersurfaces, while the next aircraft, L1+MH, has an overall desert sand (RLM 79) above, with sky blue (RLM 78) beneath. The third aircraft has temporary black undersurfaces and fuselage sides designed for nocturnal operations coupled with the standard European scheme. Two of the aircraft have white rear fuselage bands with their individual letters painted bright yellow.





ABOVE: When III./KG 77 moved to Comiso in Sicily during January 1942, its Ju 88s were repainted with desert sand (RLM 79) uppersurfaces and sky blue (RLM 78) undersurfaces. This particular aircraft, 3Z+KT, also carries the white rear fuselage band common to Luftwaffe types operating in that theatre.

BELOW: While ground crews prepare a Ju 88 A-4, L1+MA, of the Geschwader Stab of LG 1 for a bomber mission in North Africa, one of the crew strides towards the cockpit carrying his map case. The aircraft has overall desert sand (RLM 79) uppersurfaces with sky blue (RLM 78) beneath. Note the white band around the rear fuselage and the black carbon deposits from the exhaust of the Jumo 211 engines.



Ju 88s were destroyed in the action and two damaged. During the evening three destroyers under the command of Captain Lord Louis Mountbatten swept in towards Maleme and bombarded the airfield and a troop column. At 07.55 hrs next morning they were spotted by Ju 87s from I./St.G 2 and the *Kashmir* and *Kelly* were sunk. The surviving destroyer *Kipling* then attempted to rescue the survivors, but was pounced upon by Ju 88s from LG 1. Despite hitting the semi-submerged *Kelly* while carrying out violent evasive manoeuvres, the *Kipling* managed to return to Alexandria.

Despite the ferocious defence of Crete put up by Commonwealth and Greek troops, the outcome of the fighting was now inevitable. A week after the first German landings, there were almost 27,000 Axis troops on the island, and the Allies were forced to begin the evacuation of their forces to Alexandria in Egypt. The troop-laden vessels were supported by units of the Royal Navy which all came under heavy *Luftwaffe* attack. On 27 April the battleship *Barham* was slightly damaged, but two days later two destroyers, *Hereward* and *Imperial*, were sunk, the former possibly by the Do 17s of KG 2. The cruisers *Orion* and *Dido* were also damaged by Ju 87s. The next day the Australian cruiser *Perth* and the destroyer *Kelvin* were damaged by Ju 88s of II./LG 1, and on the 31st the same *Gruppe* damaged the destroyer *Napier* but lost two of its Ju 88s. On 1 June the cruiser *Calcutta* achieved the doubtful distinction of being the last naval vessel of the campaign to be sunk. The commander of VIII. *Fliegerkorps*, General Wolfram von Richthofen, later wrote:

'I was convinced we had scored a great and decisive victory... We had at last demonstrated that a fleet at sea within range of the Luftwaffe was vulnerable – provided the weather permitted flying.'

Shortly afterwards, Richthofen's command headed for the border of the Soviet Union to take part in 'Barbarossa', leaving only II./KG 26 and I. and II./LG 1 (later joined by a part of the III. *Gruppe* from Catania) at Eleusis in Greece. The remaining part

of III./LG 1 operated from Derna in North Africa, their aircraft adopting a desert scheme of sand upper and side surfaces with bright blue beneath, stocks of Italian paints being used for both colours prior to the adoption of RLM 78 and 79. When the Ju 88s returned to Sicily they often retained their sand coloured upper surfaces but, for night operations, the blue lower surfaces were overpainted with a temporary black finish.

Meanwhile the bombing of Malta had continued. During a raid on Valetta and the airfields of Luqa and Ta'Qali in the early evening of 29 April 1941, the loss of the first Ju 88 on Maltese soil was recorded. This was the A-4 coded L1+BT, piloted by Fw. Rudolf Lenzner of 9./LG 1, which crashed near the Pembroke Firing Range where the whole crew was taken prisoner. Shortly afterwards, on 6 May 1941, a second Ju 88 crashed on Malta. This was 4D+FS of 8./KG 30 piloted by Uffz. Werner Gerhardt which was probably shot down by a Hurricane at Ospizio. This time all the crew perished.

The period between May and December 1941 saw relatively little activity by the *Luftwaffe* bomber force in the Mediterranean apart from a few night raids over Egypt and the North African front by II./KG 26. Then, in mid-December 1941, five *Gruppen* of Ju 88 A-4s – I./KG 54, II. and III./KG 77, KGr 606 and KGr 806 – transferred to Sicily to renew operations against Malta. These operations will be covered in Part 3 of this history.

BELOW: Probably taken in Sicily, this photograph shows ground staff manhandling a trolley holding an SC 250 bomb beneath the wing of a Ju 88 A-4 of LG 1 in readiness for loading it beneath the centre section racks. Dark green paint (RLM 80) has been sprayed in a mottle effect over the desert tan (RLM 79) uppersurfaces.



3. Stamp was awarded the *Ritterkreuz* on 24 March 1943 for his operations with 1./LG 1 in the Mediterranean theatre before becoming *Kapitän* of the *Wilde Sau* night fighter unit 8./JG 300 in August 1943. He was later to lead a special Me 262 air-to-air bombing unit.



LEFT: A Ju 88 A-4, 4D+GK, of 2./KG 30 in flight. The aircraft carries the familiar diving eagle badge, the white background colour of which indicated the I. Gruppe. The individual letter 'G' is painted red, outlined in white, and the underside of the wingtips and the spinner tips are painted white.

RIGHT: 10.(See)Staffel/LG 2 had been formed on 1 November 1938 at Travemünde under Major Wolf with the Staffelführer (See) being Oblt. Werner Klümper and the Staffelführer (Land) being Oblt. Arved Crüger. On 15 September 1939 the unit was redesignated 3./KG 30, bringing the I. Gruppe of that Geschwader up to full strength. During 1941 the Staffel operated at various periods from Mediterranean bases. This Ju 88 A-4 has the code 4D+HL painted in black on the fuselage sides with the individual letter 'H' in yellow.

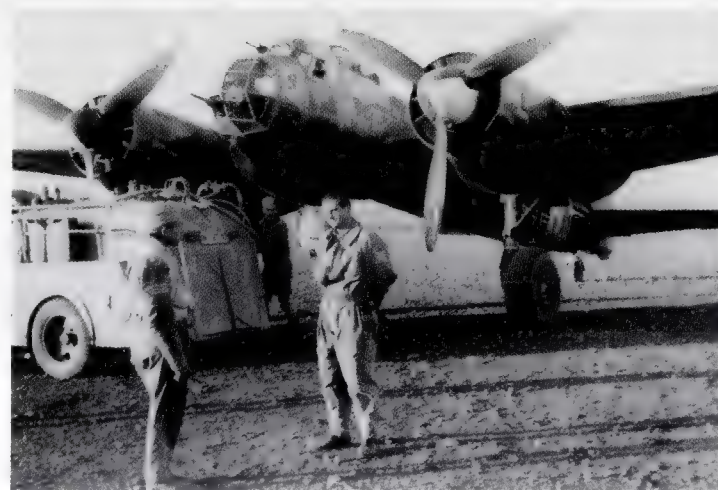


LEFT: Clouds of sand are thrown up as this Ju 88 takes off from a Mediterranean airfield with two bombs slung beneath the fuselage centre section.



LG 1 Emblem

RIGHT: Hptm. Joachim Helbig (in the centre of the photograph) in conversation with an unidentified Oberleutnant, probably one of his Staffelkapitäne. Helbig was appointed Kommandeur of I./LG 1 on the last day of December 1941, replacing Hptm. Siegfried von Eichhorn. The Ju 88 A-4, L1+MH, in the background has desert sand uppersurfaces over which dark green patches have been sprayed. The sky blue undersides are partly obscured by temporary black finish and the unusual method of toning down the white areas of the fuselage Balkenkreuz is noteworthy.



Junkers Ju 88 A-4 of I./LG 1, December 1941

At this time I./LG 1 was based at Eleusis in Greece operating regularly over North Africa. For these operations desert camouflage of desert tan (79) with dark green (80) mottling was applied. In this case the sky blue (78) undersides were overpainted in temporary black finish for night flying.



ABOVE: These Ju 88 A-4s fly above a thick cloud formation in the dawn sunshine on another mission.

BELOW: This photograph shows graphically the cramped conditions for the crew of the Ju 88 when attempting to operate the two rearward firing 7.9 mm MG 17 machine-guns simultaneously.



BELOW: The 'beetle eye' glazed nose section of the Ju 88 which contained the bomb aiming equipment. The gondola below the rear fuselage incorporated the crew entry hatch and a flexibly mounted 7.9 mm MG 15 machine gun.



LEFT: Luftwaffe aircrew, like their RAF counterparts, were provided with life jackets in case their aircraft be forced to ditch in the sea.

BELOW: Ground crew watch as a Ju 88 prepares for take-off from a desert airfield. It is probable that the aircraft belonged to LG 1.



Barbarossa

The invasion of the Soviet Union, June-December 1941

"The 'eggs' are released. Piles of fire and smoke, fountains of earth and dust mixed with wreckage of all kinds, shoot upwards. Unfortunately, our stick of bombs falls to the right of the ammunition bunkers. But a whole row of bombs goes across the field and ploughs up the runway. The take-off strip receives two hits. As our formation turns I see 15 parked fighters go up in flames together with most of the barracks. Toni cries 'Flak!', but we can only see a single shot over a kilometre behind us. We are already out of range. Then comes a cry over the radio, 'Fighters behind!' Our machine guns rattle and our formation tightens. Although we offer a big target to the Russians, our defensive fire is concentrated, and as the 27 Heinkels spray the Russians, they dive away and disappear."

Lt. Arnold Döring, He 111 pilot with KG 53,
22 June 1941

On 1 August 1940, while the Battle of Britain was at its height, a conference was held at Hitler's *Berghof* at which it was decided to attack the Soviet Union during the spring of 1941. At this time, the Führer was convinced that Britain would soon capitulate without the need for 'Sealion'. Apart from the bombing of the island's resources, he considered that its surrender would be hastened by his U-boat offensive which, he further reasoned, would either starve its population into submission or at least prompt it to sue for peace on his terms. In his mind, the attack on Russia was a far more important undertaking than an armed invasion of the British Isles, not only for ideological reasons, but because he was convinced that sooner or later Russia would attack Germany.

The detailed plan for the invasion of the Soviet Union, Hitler's War Directive No. 21, was issued on 18 December under the code name Operation 'Barbarossa'. This stated that, 'The Wehrmacht must be prepared, even before the conclusion of the war against England, to crush Soviet Russia in a rapid campaign.' The Directive went on to state, perhaps rather optimistically, that 'the Luftwaffe will have to make available for this Eastern campaign supporting forces of such strength that the Army will be able to bring land operations to a speedy conclusion and that eastern Germany will be as little damaged as possible by enemy air attack.' Thus Germany prepared for a war on two fronts, a situation that had already largely contributed to Germany's loss of the First World War.

For the assault, Germany was to assemble three Army Groups, *Heeresgruppe Nord* (North) under General Wilhelm von Leeb, *Heeresgruppe Mitte* (Centre) under General Fedor von Bock and *Heeresgruppe Süd* (South) under General Gerd von Rundstedt. The main strike would be made by von Bock's group towards Minsk, Smolensk and Moscow with von Leeb's group aiming for Leningrad (modern day St. Petersburg) and von Rundstedt's for Rostov and Kiev. Each group was to be supported by an Air Fleet, *Nord* by *Luftflotte 1*, *Mitte* by *Luftflotte 2* and *Süd* by *Luftflotte 4*, their main task being the destruction of the Soviet Air Force.

For various reasons the assault was delayed until the summer of 1941, the first *Luftwaffe* units beginning their transfer eastwards towards the end of May. By 22 June, the date finally chosen for *Barbarossa*, German forces using bases in occupied Poland and friendly Hungary and Rumania were arranged along a 1,000 mile front. Because of the intensive period of operations that the *Kampfgruppen* had experienced during the Battle of Britain, only 959 bombers were available, of which 728 were serviceable against about 1,200 available (with 811 serviceable) during the height of the earlier conflict.

BELOW: When delivered to the Luftwaffe, virtually all German aircraft had a four-letter call sign applied to their fuselage sides. This He 111, CA+NA, has a yellow band painted around the rear fuselage suggesting that it was destined for the Eastern Front.



Luftwaffe Bomber Order of Battle for Barbarossa 21 June 1941

Luftflotte 2			Generaloberst Alfred Keller			Insterburg, East Prussia		
I. Fliegerkorps			General der Flieger Helmuth Förster			Gumbinnen		
Stab/KG 1	He 111 H	Oberst Karl Angerstein	Powunden	1	(1)			
II. Gruppe/KG 1	Ju 88 A	Hptm. Otto Stams	Powunden	29	(27)			
III. Gruppe/KG 1	Ju 88 A	Major Walter Lehweß-Litzmann	Eichwalde	30	(29)			
Stab/KG 76	Ju 88 A	Obstlt. Dr. Ernst Bormann	Gerdauen					
I. Gruppe/KG 76	Ju 88 A	Hptm. Robert von Sichart	Gerdauen	31	(22)			
II. Gruppe/KG 76	Ju 88 A	Hptm. Freiherr Volprecht Riedesel zu Eisenbach	Jürgenfelde	31	(22)			
III. Gruppe/KG 76	Ju 88 A	Major Franz von Benda ?	Schippenbeil	29	(22)			
Stab/KG 77	Ju 88 A	Major Johann Raithel	Heiligenbeil	1	(1)			
I. Gruppe/KG 77	Ju 88 A	Hptm. Joachim Pötter ?	Jesau	30	(23)			
II. Gruppe/KG 77	Ju 88 A	Hptm. Dietrich Peltz	Wormditt	31	(23)			
III. Gruppe/KG 77	Ju 88 A	Major von Frankenburg	Heiligenbeil	29	(20)			
Fliegerführer Ostsee			Obstlt. Wolfgang von Wild			Metgethen		
KGr 806	Ju 88 A	Obstlt. Hans Emig (KIA on 28 June 1941)	Prowehren	30	(18)			
Luftflotte 2			Generalfeldmarschall Albert Kesselring			Warsaw, Poland		
VIII. Fliegerkorps			General der Flieger Wolfram von Richthofen			Bremen		
Stab/KG 2	Do 17 Z	Oberst Herbert Rieckhoff	Arys-Rostken	11	(5)			
I. Gruppe/KG 2	Do 17 Z	Major Waldemar Lerche	Arys-Rostken	35	(19)			
III. Gruppe/KG 2	Do 17 Z	Oberst Heinrich Conrady	Lyck	41	(23)			
III. Gruppe/KG 3	Do 17 Z	Hptm. Major Wladimir Graowaes	Suwalki	44	(18)			
II. Fliegerkorps			Gen. Major Bruno Loerzer			Otwock near Warsaw		
Stab/KG 3	Ju 88 A	Oberst Wolfgang von Chamier-Glisczynski	Deblin-Irena	2	(2)			
I. Gruppe/KG 3	Ju 88 A	Major Heinze	Deblin-Irena	42	(32)			
II. Gruppe/KG 3	Ju 88 A	Hptm. Kurt Peters	Deblin-Irena	38	(32)			
Stab/KG 53	He 111 H & P	Obstlt. Paul Weitkus	Radom	6	(4)			
I. Gruppe/KG 53	He 111 H & P	Obstlt. Erich Kaufmann	Grojek	28	(18)			
II. Gruppe/KG 53	He 111 H & P	Major Hans Steinweg	Radom	21	(10)			
III. Gruppe/KG 53	He 111 H & P	Major Richard Fabian	Radzyn	31	(22)			
Luftflotte 4			Generaloberst Alexander Löhr			Rzeszow, Rumania		
V. Fliegerkorps			General der Flieger Robert Ritter von Greim			Lipsko near Zamosz		
Stab/KG 51	Ju 88 A	Major Hans-Bruno Schulz-Heyn	Krosno	2	(2)			
I. Gruppe/KG 51	Ju 88 A	Hptm. Heinrich Hahn	Krosno	22	(22)			
II. Gruppe/KG 51	Ju 88 A	Hptm. Max Stadelmeier ¹	Krosno	36	(29)			
III. Gruppe/KG 51	Ju 88 A	Major Walter Marienfeld	Lezany	32	(28)			
Stab/KG 54	Ju 88 A	Obstlt. Otto Höhne	Lublin/Swidnik	1	(1)			
I. Gruppe/KG 54	Ju 88 A	Hptm. Richard Linke	Lublin/Swidnik	34	(31)			
II. Gruppe/KG 54	Ju 88 A	Major Erhardt Krafft von Delmensingen	Lublin/Swidnik	36	(33)			
Stab/KG 55	He 111 H & Bf 110	Oberst Benno Kosch	Labunie	8	(7)			
I. Gruppe/KG 55	He 111 H	Major Rudolf Kiel	Labunie	27	(27)			
II. Gruppe/KG 55	He 111 H	Major Dr. Ernst Kuhl	Labunie	24	(22)			
III. Gruppe/KG 55	He 111 H	Hptm. Heinrich Wittmer	Klemensow	25	(24)			

IV.Fliegerkorps

Generalleutnant Kurt Pflugbeil

Ramnicul-Sarat

II. Gruppe/KG 4	He 111 H	Obstlt. Dr. Gottlieb Wolff	Zilistea ²	24	(8)
Stab/KG 27	He 111 H	Major Gerhard Ulbricht	Focsani-Süd	5	(5)
I. Gruppe/KG 27	He 111 H	Hptm. Fritz Reinhard	Focsani-Süd	30	(22)
II. Gruppe/KG 27	He 111 H	Hptm. Reinhard Günzel	Focsani-Süd	24	(21)
III. Gruppe/KG 27	He 111 H	Hptm. Von Beust	Zilistea	28	(25)

Luftflotte 5

Generaloberst Jürgen Stumpff

Oslo

(Although I./KG 26, Stab, I. and III./KG 30 were attached to Luftflotte 5 at this time only II./KG 30 operated against Soviet forces)

II. Gruppe/KG 30	Ju 88 A	Hptm. Eberhard Roeger (minus 6./KG 30)	Banak
6. Staffel/KG 30	Ju 88 A		Kirkenes

1. Stadelmeier was killed in action on 22 June 1941, being replaced by Major Wilhelm von Friedberg.

2. At this time 5./KG 4 was in Catania Sicily

BELOW: When Barbarossa began on 22 June 1941, all Luftwaffe bombers carried the standard dark green uppersurface camouflage with pale blue undersides. This Ju 88 A-4, thought to be from 6./KG 76 based at Jürgenfelde in East Prussia, has the yellow fuselage band and wingtips associated with operations in the East with its individual aircraft letter 'G' also painted yellow. The Werk Nummer is painted above the swastika on the fin in white.





LEFT: In March 1941, II./KG 3 under Hptm. Kurt Peters began to exchange its Do 17 Zs for Ju 88 A-4s at Wunstorf in Germany, briefly transferring to Le Culot in France in May before moving to Deblin-Irena in Poland for 'Barbarossa', where it came under the control of Luftflotte 1. This photograph of a Ju 88 A-4 of 5./KG 3 passing overhead shows the aircraft's pale blue undersurfaces with its individual letter 'A' painted below each wing outboard of the national insignia in black. An unusual feature is that the unit code, '5K', painted in black on the fuselage sides is outlined in white. The individual letter 'A' is in red and also edged in white, while the Staffel letter 'N' is positioned over the yellow rear fuselage band. These two aircraft, 5K+FN and 5K+EN, (*BELOW*) also from 5./KG 3, had their individual letters painted red outlined in white. The spinners of both aircraft were painted red.

The invasion began during the early morning of 22 June when about 150 experienced night bomber crews from KG 2 (Do 17s), KG 3 (Ju 88s) and KG 53 (He 111s), flying in small groups of three to five, made for Soviet airbases. Arriving just after 03.00 hrs, the bombers dropped incendiary bombs to guide the main force of some 870 medium bombers, dive-bombers, destroyers and fighter-bombers to the targets. They were greeted by the astonishing spectacle of Soviet aircraft aligned in neat rows on their airfields and the attacking force claimed the destruction of an estimated 1,800 for the loss of just two of its own aircraft. Apart from conventional guns and bombs, some of the attackers were using the newly-released SD 2 splinter bombs which had been developed for anti-personnel use. These 'Teufelseier' (devil's eggs) were fused to burst either on impact or a few feet above the ground and when dropped en masse caused devastation among Soviet aircraft. About 360 of these weapons were carried by a Ju 88, but problems were experienced with their improvised racks which could result in the bombs jamming after being armed. The slightest jolt could then blow the carrier aircraft to pieces.

After re-fuelling and rearming, a second wave of bombers hit similar targets and claimed another 700 Soviet aircraft destroyed for the loss of just 33. Further strikes followed, but this time not without cost. The II. and III./KG 51 were particularly badly hit, mainly by Polikarpov I-16 fighters from the 66 ShAP, losing a total of fifteen crews (60 airmen) including the *Kommandeur* of the II. Gruppe, Hptm. Max Stadelmeier and the *Kapitän* of the 5. Staffel, Oblt. von Wenchowski. In addition, almost 50 per cent of the Ju 88s from the two Gruppen were destroyed or damaged.

Typical of *Luftwaffe* bomber operations on this day were those undertaken by the 'Totenkopf' *Geschwader*, KG 54. Around 02.30 hrs, the first of 23 Ju 88 A-5s and A-6s from I./KG 54 took off from Lublin/Swidnik in southern Poland and headed for the Soviet fighter airfields at Koschirsky, Kolki and Janowka. They were carrying a total of 44 SC 250 and 220 SC 50 blast bombs with which they claimed the destruction of three I-16 and six I-153 fighters. II./KG 54 took off about three quarters of an hour later, causing similar damage at the airfields of Kolki, Luck and Wilick. No losses were recorded. At 06.35 hrs another eight Ju 88s from I./KG 54 headed for Nielisk carrying a total of 30 SC 250 and 80 SC 50 bombs. This time they were intercepted by about 30 Soviet I-153 biplanes, and one was claimed shot down. II./KG 54 then took off at 07.30 hrs on its second mission of the day against Kolki and Luck, causing considerable damage to Russian troops and guns. The *Geschwader* suffered its first loss of the campaign in this attack when a Ju 88 A-6 carrying the fuselage code B3+FM and piloted by the *Kapitän*



RIGHT: For the campaign against the Soviet Union, III./KG 53 under Major Richard Fabian moved from the West to Radzyn in Poland on 18 June 1941. The speed of the German advance was such that it transferred to Minsk-Dubinskaya on 7 July and to Orscha on 4 August. This aircraft, A1+NS from 8./KG 53, has a yellow rear fuselage band and wingtips with its red individual letter 'N' outlined in white.



Heinkel He 111 H-6 of 8./KG 53, July 1941

Note the absence of unit markings beneath the wings and the yellow rear fuselage band and undersurfaces of the wingtips, a marking peculiar to Luftwaffe aircraft operating on the northern and central sectors of the Eastern front.



ABOVE: On 18 June 1941 I./KG 53 under Obstdt. Erich Kaufmann moved from Vitry-en-Artois in France to Grojek in Poland to take part in the initial strikes against Soviet Russia. As the campaign in the East progressed the Gruppe moved rapidly to Rogoznica on 29 June, to Miedzyrzec on 2 July and to Minsk-Dubinskaya on 9 July. An unusual feature of the Gruppe's He 111s was that both their individual and Staffel letters were invariably outlined in white. This particular machine, A1+JK, carries standard European camouflage.

of 4./KG 54, *Obst.* Günther Seubert, belly landed at Luck airfield. Although Seubert was slightly injured, he was later rescued from Russian captivity by the German advance. *Lt.* Genth's Ju 88 A-6, B3+DM, was also shot down by flak, but he and his crew escaped unhurt. The third mission of the day was flown around 08.00 hrs by I./KG 54 against Janowka and Kolki in which a large number of fighters were destroyed. A fourth mission was flown in the afternoon followed by a fifth around 17.30 hrs. This resulted in the loss of the *Kapitän* of 3./KG 54, *Obst.* Rudolf Naumann, whose Ju 88 A-5, B3+GL, was shot down by fighters near Luck. He was badly injured in the emergency landing that followed and died five days later. When the day drew to a close, KG 54 had claimed a total of 150 Soviet aircraft destroyed on the ground.

During this first day, the *Luftwaffe* bomber force lost a total of 21 Ju 88s destroyed and 11 damaged, mostly from KG 51; 11 He 111s destroyed and six damaged, most of these from KG 55 which had encountered a formation of I-16s *Ratas*; but only one Do 17 destroyed and three damaged. The Russians themselves were later to admit to losing 1,200 aircraft on this day, over two-thirds of them on the ground.

The *Luftwaffe* assault continued with little respite on the following day. In the north the three bomber units under I. *Fliegerkorps* lost a total of 18 Ju 88s, four from KG 77 and one from KG 76 being shot down by friendly fighters. In one case, the Ju 88 returned fire, shooting down a Bf 109 of 5./JG 54. As today, so-called "friendly fire" incidents were quite common during the Second World War. In the centre of the Front, the Do 17s of III./KG 2 flew some particularly successful attacks against Russian tanks, for which the *Kapitän* of 9./KG 2, *Hptm.* Walter Bradel, was subsequently awarded the *Ritterkreuz*. In the south III./KG 55 lost one He 111 to a Soviet fighter, one to flak, and the crews of seven other aircraft returned with some of their crew members killed or injured by anti-aircraft fire.

Despite destroying a large portion of the Soviet Air Force on the ground, some Soviet fighters were still active, these claiming 21 victories on 24 June in the Minsk area, including two Ju 88s. Known *Luftwaffe* losses included five He 111s from KG 53 and two Do 17s from KG 2. Next day, a further 251 Soviet aircraft were claimed by the *Luftwaffe* and by the end of the day bomber crews were reporting that they were having difficulty in finding more to destroy. By the end of 26 June the bombers of von Greim's V. *Fliegerkorps* (KG 51, KG 54 and KG 55) had flown 1,600 sorties during which they had attacked 77 airfields and claimed 910 aircraft destroyed. The same units also became engaged in striking at Soviet armour attempting to block the road to Kiev and prevent the tanks of *Panzergruppe I* from advancing.

By the end of the month most of the Soviet Air Force on the Eastern Front had been destroyed, *Luftflotte 4*, for example, claiming the destruction of over 1,000 aircraft in the air and 1,700 on the ground. This proved to be an exaggeration, but the Soviets did admit the loss of 1,669 machines. Some *Luftwaffe* bomber units did suffer losses to flak. For example III./KG 1 had lost four of its Ju 88s shot down on the 28th during an attack on Russian tanks.

'The military police then opened fire on the three of us...'

Fw. RUDOLF SCHEURICH, (CREW MEMBER WITH 8./KG 51)

On 25 June 1941 I took off from Lezany as part of *Oblt.* Bretschneider's crew with orders to attack Tarnopol airfield. About ten minutes before reaching our target, we spotted an airstrip on which four or five Martin bombers were parked. We destroyed them with our SD 2 bombs.

After dropping our bombs we were attacked by about four *Rata* fighters. We were hit by the first bursts, probably in the elevator. The pilot shouted "*Prepare for a forced landing!*" The radio operator then jettisoned the canopy and the pilot lined up for a belly landing. This went smoothly and we clambered out. Karl pulled the self-destruct lever and the aircraft blew up. We stayed together and crept away, moving from cornfield to cornfield.

Just before sunset we were spotted by some Russian military police. They surrounded our hiding place until escape seemed impossible. Three of us put our hands up and tried to surrender but *Oblt.* Bretschneider lay quiet.

The military police then opened fire on the three of us, hitting Fritz in the head so that he collapsed. Karl and I leapt up and ran from the cornfield into a potato patch. Karl fell, shouting, "Go on!" I wasn't sure whether he had been hit or not.

Now the rifle fire was being concentrated on me. After about 100 metres I too stumbled and lay still for a moment. I was fired upon again but I managed to crawl into a dip with a little stream running through it. I crossed this, and hid in a bog. After a while things finally quietened down, but I then found it very difficult to extract myself from the mud.

As I had no compass, watch or map, it was very difficult to find my way. I set out, heading for the red evening sky. Suddenly I found myself in an artillery position. I sank to the ground silently and after crawling back into the cornfield I stayed there until it was dark. Then I leapt up and ran: the sentry didn't notice a thing.

I had no food with me – I must have lost my ditching rations during my escape. I didn't eat for two days. On the third day I ate some clover flowers which eased the pangs a bit. On the fourth day I tried some clover leaves. I slaked my thirst with water from a puddle, filtering it through my handkerchief. Now I had such terrible indigestion that I thought I was going to burst, but it got better once I made myself vomit. Then I became feverish, and began to shake. I didn't think I would be able to carry on.

On the fifth day I stopped a woman in the fields and asked her for some bread, which she then gave me. After two or three bites the dryness in my throat prevented me from eating any more. The woman then passed me a bottle of water which I drank greedily. Immediately, I was sick again. The woman saw how weak I was and gave me some milk. This time I drank it slowly and had a bite of bread after each sip. Now that I was feeling better, the woman asked me to get out of the field as she was obviously afraid of the Russians.

On the sixth day I thought I would have to surrender, but on a track I met a Ukrainian peasant. He spoke to me in Ukrainian, which I couldn't understand, but when I made it clear that I was German he spoke to me in that language. He had once served in the Austrian army. I told him I was an airman on the run and that some of my friends had been killed. He advised me to give myself up: there were too many Russians around and I would never escape. Nevertheless he took me with him to his farm and hid me for the day. He dug a hole for me and after I lay down he covered me with grass. In the evening we went to his house together.

I had hidden my uniform jacket in a bundle of grass which he carried on his back. I put on his coat and cap. He explained to me that I had to go through a flak position. As every young Ukrainian had now been called up, I had to feign a limp so that I would not look suspicious. When we reached his home, his wife was very unhappy; she was afraid of the Russians, too. But when she realised the state I was in, she came over to me and made me understand that I was to sleep in the attic.

My hosts were very poor but another woman, who spoke German and was obviously better off, also supplied me with many things. There I stayed with the peasant folk looking after me until I was liberated on 5 July.

At about 11 o'clock that day I heard machine gun fire in the distance, but it was still Russian. When I heard what I thought was a German machine gun, I dashed from my hiding place and saw some German armoured cars. Several Ukrainians gathered around me, and soon the whole village had assembled, bringing eggs and milk and wanting to help.

A German motorcyclist then took me with him to the *SS 'Wiking' Division*, which then took me to Tarnopol. From there, the *Luftwaffe* Liaison Officer sent me to the *Stab (H)/Aufkl.Gr 41* and finally back to my unit.



Two Ju 88 A-4s of III./KG 51 in flight. Both aircraft carry the Edelweiss badge of KG 51 on the nose; the machine in the foreground, 9K+DS of 8./KG 51, has its individual letter painted red outlined in white, while the one behind, 9K+FR of 7./KG 51, has it in white. These aircraft would have been similar to the one in which Rudolf Scheurich was shot down on 25 June 1941.

NOTE: When he was shot down, Scheurich was flying in a Ju 88 A-4 coded 9K+FS. Of the other members of the crew, the pilot, *Oblt.* Bretschneider, also evaded capture but *Ofw.* Karl Harenburg and *Ofw.* Fritz Ober were killed in their confrontation with the Russian troops.



ABOVE: The 'Blitz' (Lightning) Geschwader, KG 3, carried a lightning flash on a shield on both fuselage sides of its Ju 88s, the colours varying with each Gruppe. The Geschwader Stab had a white flash on a green shield, the I. Gruppe a red flash on a white shield, the II. Gruppe a white flash on a red shield and the III. Gruppe a red flash on a yellow shield.

On 4 July, following reports of a Soviet build-up on the Russian-Latvian border, the Ju 88s from KG 76 and KG 77 attacked airfields at Idritsa and OPOCHKA. Considerable damage was caused and the one Soviet fighter which attempted to intercept was shot down by a Bf 109 from JG 54. Next day, the same two bomber units, joined by KG 1, were heavily engaged in halting an attempted Russian counter-attack. In the action that followed, 140 Soviet tanks were destroyed and 112 more aircraft destroyed on the ground. Only two Ju 88s were lost.

Although the campaign against Russian forces was going well, Hitler now decided, in his Directive No. 33 of 19 July, to raze Moscow to the ground as soon as possible as a 'reprisal for Russian attacks on Bucharest

and Helsinki.' Immediately following this directive, the *Luftwaffe* assembled a force of Ju 88s from KG 3 and KG 54 and He 111s from KG 53 and KG 55 and supplemented these by transferring from the West the He 111s of I. and III./KG 4 and I./KG 28 plus the two pathfinder *Gruppen*, III./KG 26 and KG 100. It was originally intended that these last two should only operate for a short time in the East, but the transfer was to prove much longer term.

The first attack on Moscow was flown on the night of 21/22 July by 195 bombers, the crews of which were rather surprised to find that the city, far from being undefended, had over 300 searchlights, 170 Soviet fighters and many anti-aircraft guns. Although 104 tons of bombs and 46,000 incendiaries were dropped, the bombing was largely scattered because of the city's strong defences and the results were disappointing. The incendiaries released by II./KG 55, which had been allocated the Kremlin as its target, did fall in the target area but the crews were mystified when the buildings failed to catch fire. It was later discovered that the 17th century roof had been protected by its many layers of tiles. The next night, 125 aircraft attacked the capital, and on the night of the 26/27th, this was reduced to 65. As the weeks progressed the *Luftwaffe* effort gradually dwindled in intensity and, of the 76 attacks flown against Moscow in 1941, 59 of them were carried out by forces of fewer than ten aircraft.

BELOW: This Ju 88 carries an unidentified badge apparently comprising a cross on a shield with the *Luftwaffe* eagle above in white. The only part of the unit code identifiable is the letter 'K' painted over a yellow rear fuselage band.

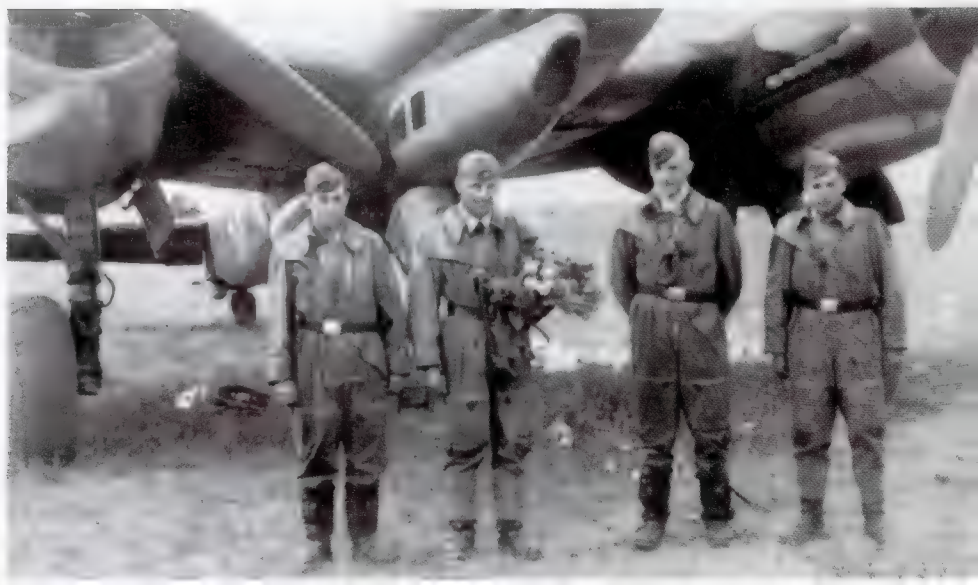


BELOW: Continuous operations against Russia soon resulted in many units celebrating record numbers of sorties. This Ju 88 being decorated by its crew, unfortunately from an unidentified unit, has just completed the Staffel's 500th mission, as indicated by the number '500' painted in white on the nose and the laurel wreath.



ABOVE: A crew from III./KG 76 pose in front of their Ju 88 A-4. The badge of the Gruppe, a black and yellow wasp with silver wings is painted below the cockpit. The spinners are mainly finished in yellow, suggesting an aircraft of the 9. Staffel.

BELOW: A Luftwaffe bomber crew pose in front of their Ju 88 following the completion of a record mission. During the early part of the Russian campaign Luftwaffe bomber units scored considerable successes, most of the opposing Soviet fighters having been destroyed on the ground.





ABOVE: The first nocturnal raid on Moscow was flown on the night of 21/22 July 1941 by 195 Luftwaffe bombers. For this mission, the undersurfaces of the aircraft were temporarily covered in black paint, but constant operations resulted in its rapid deterioration. These He 111s, possibly from 8./KG 55, have had some areas of new paint applied to cover repairs that have recently been completed.

Perhaps the only tangible result achieved by the bombing was that for about a month it forced Stalin to move his headquarters into underground metro stations.

Meanwhile German successes on the invasion front continued on the ground and in the air but, from 1 July 1941, the Soviet Air Force began seriously to challenge the *Luftwaffe* for the first time. On this day KG 53 lost four He 111s to Soviet fighters plus three more lost in a notable action. As they attempted to bomb Minsk airfield, the Heinkels were intercepted by an I-16 fighter piloted by Lt. Nikolay Terekhin who, having just landed after expending all his ammunition in an earlier attack, took off again and – still without ammunition – rammed the starboard He 111 of a *Kette* and caused it to swerve into the centre aircraft. This then smashed into the third Heinkel and within seconds the crews from all four aircraft were forced to take to their parachutes. As they drifted down, Terekhin and the *Luftwaffe* airmen began firing at each other with their pistols! The Russians had already shown similar ferocity during operations in their war against Finland. After all the destruction wrought in the previous few days, the appearance and determination of these Soviet fighters temporarily stunned the Germans. Nevertheless, attacks on airfields continued unabated, with 29 aircraft from III./KG 2 and III./KG 3 destroying 22 Soviet aircraft on the ground at Vitebsk on 5 July.

On the ground too, German troops were encountering the Soviet T-34, a tank superior to anything possessed by the *Heer* or *Waffen-SS*. As part of an attempt to counter this new threat, KG 51, KG 54 and KG 55 mounted an attack against Soviet supply columns west of Lvov on the southern front and claimed 220 vehicles destroyed, including 40 tanks. On the same day the Do 17s of KG 2 and III./KG 3 flew operations against Soviet supply columns on the central front. By 9 July German armies on this front had encircled the city of Minsk, capturing 287,704 prisoners and destroying 2,585 tanks. Ten days later, Smolensk was also encircled.

Hitler's Directive No. 34, issued on 30 July, now ordered that the main thrust be diverted to the north with the object of encircling Leningrad and linking up with the Finnish Front. Von

BELOW: Although Luftwaffe bomber operations against Russia were initially very successful, damage was caused to some machines by anti-aircraft fire. The wing of this He 111 was hit by such a shell during one of its sorties but that it returned safely to base bears testimony to the strength of the type and shows why it remained such a favourite with Luftwaffe bomber crews.



RIGHT:

A formation of He 111s in flight, probably from KG 55, with rather unusual camouflage. Although they have standard black green and dark green upper-surfaces with temporary black paint on the fuselage sides and undersurfaces. One aircraft has a black flecked mottling effect has been applied over the dark greens to help break up the aircraft's outline when viewed from above.



Bock's forces in the centre were to go over to the defensive to allow their badly stretched supply lines to be consolidated while von Rundstedt's forces in the south were to undertake limited action in the area around the Dnieper river. For the main offensive, which was to commence on 6 August, the forces of von Richthofen's VIII. *Fliegerkorps*, including KG 2 and III./KG 3, were to be attached to Keller's *Luftflotte 1*.

The strike north began, as intended, on the 6th, with *Luftflotte 1* supporting the thrust of the 18. *Armee* towards the Moscow-Leningrad railway line. Von Richthofen was to bring a much more professional approach to operations and on the 8th he ordered several bomber *Gruppen* to fly a fire

LEFT: An He 111 H of 2./KG 55 coded G1+LK. At the time of the invasion of Russia, the Staffel was commanded by Hptm. Hans Mössner and based at Labunie, moving in rapid succession to Bojary, Shitomir and Kirovgrad before returning to Melun in France in October 1941 for rest and recuperation. The I. Gruppe of KG 55 had been formed on 1 May 1939 from I./KG 155 and was redesignated III./LG 1 exactly four years later. At the time of Barbarossa it was led by Major Rudolf Kiel and was subordinated to *Luftflotte 4* which supported army operations against Odessa and towards the Black Sea.



raid against Leningrad. On the following day he recorded that one large and two small fires with a total width of 1.5 kilometres were raging in the city centre. Bombing of the city was to continue during the next few weeks, one of the heaviest attacks being mounted on 19 September when no fewer than six raids were flown between 08.14 and 23.00 hrs. Although 17 bombers were claimed destroyed by Soviet fighters and flak, only two Ju 88s and three Ju 87s were actually lost.

Meanwhile the bombers of VIII. *Fliegerkorps* were again extensively engaged against Soviet army units and, during the first twelve days of the offensive, 4,742 sorties were flown and 3,351 tons of bombs dropped, but not without cost. A total of 27 German aircraft was lost and a further 143 damaged, with VIII. *Fliegerkorps* losing 10.3 per cent of its aircraft destroyed and over 50 per cent damaged during a similar period. In the second half of the month, KG 2 flew no fewer than 155 sorties on 14 August, and two days later, KG 2, III./KG 3 and KG 77 struck against troop concentrations and railway lines to prevent a possible Soviet counter attack south of Lake Ilmen. On the 17th six Do 17s from *Geschwaderstab* of KG 2 led by *Oblt.* Werner Lutter destroyed 18 Soviet tanks in a single mission.

Many of the above losses in August were due to the improved Soviet fighter defences, an example of which was encountered during a sortie made on 7 August by *Hptm.* Gerhard Baeker of III./KG 1. Together with two other aircraft from the 9. *Staffel*, Baeker took off at 08.25 hrs in bad weather to bomb the airfield at Nizino, south-west of Leningrad. The weather was so bad that the intended escort, the Bf 109s of III./JG 54, could not take off at all. Cloud cover hampered Baeker's first strike, and after he had completed his second diving attack he was intercepted by three I-16s, which he outpaced by going to full throttle. Then nine of the new MiG-1 fighters approached and opened fire on his Ju 88. Although damaged, he dived for the treetops while the Soviet pilots made pass after pass. Thankfully for Baeker and his crew, the Russians seemed relatively inexperienced and he was at last able to escape. When he landed back at Sabarovka, it was found that his Ju 88 had received five cannon and 17 machine gun strikes which damaged the undercarriage, fuel tanks and cockpit.

BELOW: In some photographs the distinction between the black green and dark green of the uppersurface camouflage pattern is more marked than in others. In this photograph the difference between the two shades can clearly be seen. The aircraft in the foreground, 5K+GN, carries the badge of II./KG 3, a black songbird on a white disk, on both sides of the nose.



ABOVE: For operations in very cold conditions the Luftwaffe developed the diesel-powered Kärcher heating apparatus which fed hot air into the aircraft engines via flexible tubes. Here a mechanic monitors the output from such a unit to a Do 17 Z.





ABOVE: A formation of six Ju 88 A-4s from III./KG 51 in flight over the Soviet Union just after the thaw of the first winter snows in October 1941. At this time the Gruppe was based at Balti and was under the command of Major Walter Marienfeld. In this photograph it is possible to distinguish the jagged demarcation between the black green and dark green 'splinter' pattern camouflage.

BELOW: Pilot and observer look down from the cockpit for instructions from the ground crew as they get ready for take-off and another mission.



ABOVE: The first snow of the 1941/42 Russian winter fell early, in October. It melted quickly, but left airfields like quagmires or even partly under water, which severely restricted Luftwaffe operations. This photograph of an unidentified Ju 88 graphically illustrates the problem.



Meanwhile operations were also being flown by *Luftflotte* 5 in the far north in support of Finland and against the important Soviet port of Murmansk on the Barents Sea. Most of its bomber operations were flown by II./KG 30 against the Kirov railway, along which supplies received from Britain were transported south. Although the line was severed over one hundred times during 1941, operations did result in the loss of II./KG 30's *Kommandeur*, *Hptm.* Eberhard Roeger, on 3 July. He was replaced by *Major* Horst von Riesen.

By 6 September 1941, as German forces neared the outskirts of Leningrad, Hitler issued another directive, War Directive No. 35, in which he demanded an advance towards Poltava and Kharkov in the south and the destruction of the forces around Kiev in the centre. The latter was to be a preparation for Operation 'Taifun' (Typhoon), the continuation of the assault on Moscow which was scheduled to begin on the 15th. The bombers of von Greim's V. *Fliegerkorps* had already begun the assault around Kiev by striking against the traffic centre of Dnepropetrovsk, and by 23 August German troops had established an enclave on the eastern side of the Dneiper. On the same day the Ju 88s and Do 17s of KG 3 and the He 111s of KG 53 had devastated the rail junction at Chernigov.

For 'Taifun' itself VIII. *Fliegerkorps* was transferred back to *Luftflotte* 2 and other units arrived from *Luftflotte* 4. By the time the assault began, on 30 September, Kesselring's command possessed 1,320 aircraft, over half the *Luftwaffe* forces on the eastern Front. At the same time it had claimed the destruction of no fewer than 14,500 Soviet aircraft since the beginning of the campaign.

At first the operation went well, with Orel falling to German forces on 3 October and Bryansk being encircled. On the same day, the *Luftwaffe* flew 984 sorties and destroyed 679 Soviet vehicles and severely disrupted the defending forces. Three days later Bryansk itself fell and by this time Russian control over the central front had collapsed. On 7 October *Luftwaffe* bombers flew 800 sorties, destroying 20 tanks, 34 guns and 650 vehicles. Earlier in the day, the first snow had fallen in the Moscow area, but although this quickly thawed, the melting snow turned the roads to mud, which further disrupted the German supply situation, while the *Luftwaffe*'s flying operations were hindered by the softened surface of the airstrips.

After the mud came the intense cold. By early November, III./KG 51, which had moved to Nikolayev on 23 October, reported that the ground had frozen. Although this allowed flying operations to resume, the bitter blizzards and intense cold caused other problems as the unit's austere accommodation was a former cadet block with no glass in the windows and no heating of any sort. There was also no proper winter clothing and virtually no shelter under which routine maintenance could be carried out. Although KG 51 was equipped with *Kärcher Wärmgeräte* warm air blowers, the mechanics often had to begin warming the engines at 2 am in the morning to ensure all the aircraft would be ready for a dawn take-off.

IGHT: Two
e 111 H-6s of
/KG 27 being
adied for a
ission during the
ussian winter of
041/42. The
ircraft have
emporary white
aint covering
eir upper-
urfaces, with
eavy streaks of
moke blackening
tending out from
e exhausts on the
nderside of the
ings. The aircraft
the foreground,
G+ML, has its
ividual letter
aint yellow
(LM 27). Note the
histles fitted to
e row of bombs
the foreground.
ese were
esigned to cause
maximum adverse
fect to enemy
orale.





LEFT: In contrast to the photograph opposite, this He 111 H of KG 27 has the undersurfaces of the wing centre section and under parts of the engines painted black. The reason for this is unclear but was perhaps done to avoid the deleterious effects of continuous exhaust staining on the pale blue paintwork.

Meanwhile, the weather had brought German Army operations to a virtual halt. On 6 December *Taifun* ended and two days later Hitler issued Directive No. 39 which ordered the *Wehrmacht* to abandon immediately all major offensive operations and to go on the defensive because of 'the severe winter weather which has come surprisingly early in the East.' Already Stalin had launched a counter-attack supported by 1,376 aircraft and, although relatively weak in nature, it did startle the *Luftwaffe* into forming temporary ground units to plug gaps in the front line.

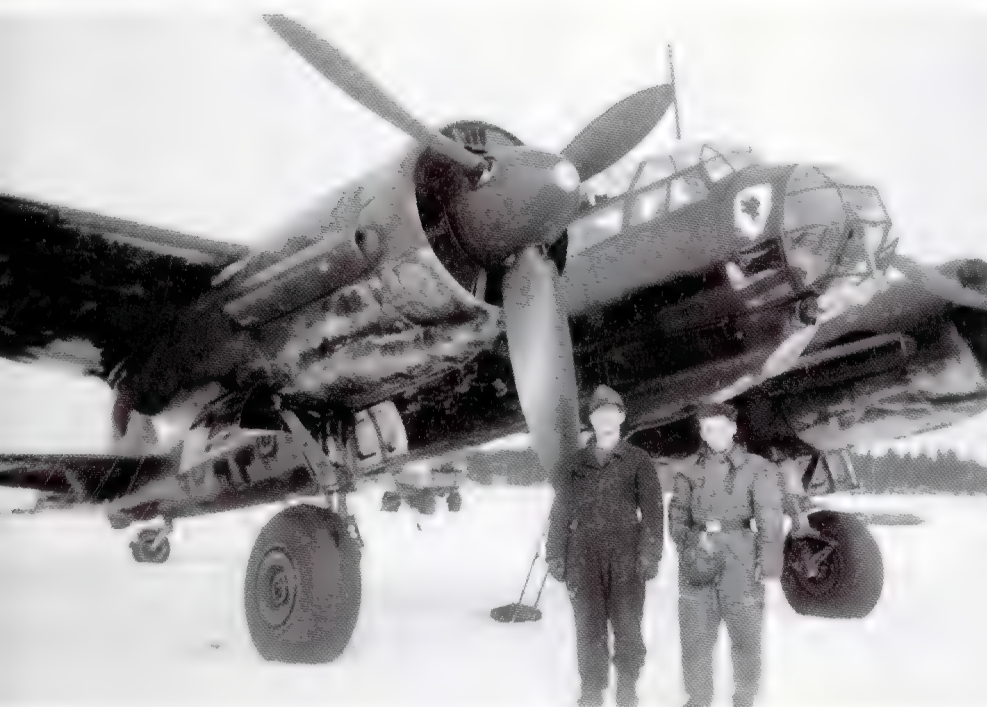
The halt in Germany's offensive allowed several *Luftwaffe* bomber *Gruppen* to return to Germany for rest and recuperation. One of the first to make the journey was III./KG 2 which arrived at Hesepe on 26 September 1941 to begin re-equipment with the Do 217. The *Gruppe* was joined at Achmer on 1 November by the *Stab* and I./KG 2 which also began conversion to the new bomber. II./KG 77 also returned in September, and following a period of rest, began retraining for operations in the Mediterranean. I./KG 55 transferred to Wien-Aspern on 1 October, followed by II. and III./KG 55 on 18 November, these eventually returning to Russia. Also in November, II./KG 54 returned to Landsberg, but in December the trickle became a flood. Units to return during the month included I. and III./KG 3 (the latter re-equipping with the Ju 88 at Gütersloh), III./KG 4, I./KG 53, I./KG 54, II./KG 76 and I. and III./KG 77. On the 15th of the month KGr. 100 was redesignated I./KG 100 at Märkisch-Friedland and a second *Gruppe* was formed from III./KG 26. At the same time I./KG 28 became the new III./KG 26. After the new year, other bomber units also returned to Germany to rest, these including II./KG 27, III./KG 53 and I./KG 76. Many of these units would return to Russia ready for the spring offensive of 1942.



LEFT: With the onset of the Russian winter the uppersurfaces of most operational German aircraft were overpainted with temporary white camouflage. This He 111, probably being used for transport or liaison duties, has had its call sign re-applied using a simple black outline.



ABOVE: After continuous operations, the temporary white finish applied to bombers operating during the harsh Russian winter began to wear off giving them a very patchy appearance. Where time and operational conditions allowed it, this paint was re-applied, but this often proved far from easy in freezing temperatures. This He 111 H of 7./KG 27 has the whole of its code, 1G+ER, painted black. At this time, November 1941, III./KG 27 was based at Millerovo and commanded by Hptm. Hans-Henning Freiherr von Beust. In January 1942 von Beust took over as Kommodore of the Geschwader.



LEFT: Even after the first winter snowfalls in Russia some bombers retained their dark green upper surfaces as with this Ju 88 of KG 30. The undersurfaces of this aircraft still have traces of temporary black paint beneath. Note the flame dampers fitted to the engines indicating the aircraft was probably used for night operations.

BELOW: III./KG 3 began to exchange its Do 17 Zs for Ju 88 As at Gütersloh in Germany during November 1941. Following re-equipment it transferred to Pleskau-Süd in the southern sector of the Eastern Front under the control of Luftflotte 4. This machine, 5K+IS, belonged to the 8. Staffel, its spinners being painted in red, which identified the squadron and yellow, which indicated the III. Gruppe.



RIGHT: After intensive operations during the desperately cold Russian winter of 1941/42, the temporary white camouflage paint on this Do 17 Z has become very worn. This aircraft belongs to 7./KG 3, the last German bomber unit to fly the type operationally. Traces can be seen of a yellow rear fuselage band.



Dornier Do 17 Z-2 of 7./KG 3, November 1941

III./KG 3 was the last Luftwaffe bomber unit to be equipped with the Do 17. It finally began conversion to the Ju 88 at Gütersloh in December 1941. The temporary white camouflage applied to the upper surfaces of this aircraft presented a very worn appearance following regular operations.



LEFT: The Kärcher heating apparatus, often mounted on sleds, proved an invaluable aid to Luftwaffe ground crews as they attempted to start the engines of a Do 17 of III./KG 3 during the horrendous Russian winter of 1941/42. Even so, the temperatures during this time were often so low that even these heaters froze. Another method was to thin the engine oil, which became thick at low temperatures and prevented the engines from being turned over, with petrol. This evaporated as the engine warmed up after starting. Another cold starting technique, copied from the Russians, involved lighting fires under the engines to warm them.



LEFT: An alternative to pre-heating the engines prior to starting in cold conditions was to position the aircraft beneath a specially constructed temporary building. Apart from assisting maintenance in cold weather, this building also enabled the work to be carried out with a degree of comfort both by day and night. This Fw 200 belonged to KG 40 based in Norway.

RIGHT: When III./KG 3 returned to Germany to re-equip with the Ju 88, its Do 17s were passed to a Croatian squadron which was formed within the Luftwaffe in October 1941. Designated 10.(Kroat)/KG 3, it received training at Greifswald and began operations at Vitebsk just before Christmas 1941. After losing six crews on operations the unit temporarily returned to Croatia, returning to Russia in July 1942 as 15.(Kroat)/KG 53. The red and white 'Ustasha' emblem of Croatia was painted beneath the cockpit.





LEFT: A Do 17 P-1 reconnaissance aircraft of Aufklärungsgruppe (F)/33 in Russia during the winter of 1941-42. Although not of a bomber unit, this photograph is interesting in that it shows the oversize Balkenkreuz which were painted beneath the wings of some aircraft to emphasise their friendly status to German anti-aircraft gunners.



RIGHT: This He 111 operated as a transport and liaison aircraft with the Transport Staffel of I. Fliegerkorps based at Roupki near Luga in Russia during the winter months of 1941/42. The aircraft carries temporary white winter camouflage which has suffered considerable wear. The unit code B1+BA has been painted on both sides of the fuselage in black.

BELOW AND BELOW RIGHT: This Ju 88 A-4 of I./KG 30 runs its engines on a snow covered airfield during a power unit test. The crew entry hatch is hanging open with a ladder propped against the hatch. The black diving eagle badge is clearly visible in both photos, its white background indicating an aircraft of the I. Gruppe.



June-December 1941



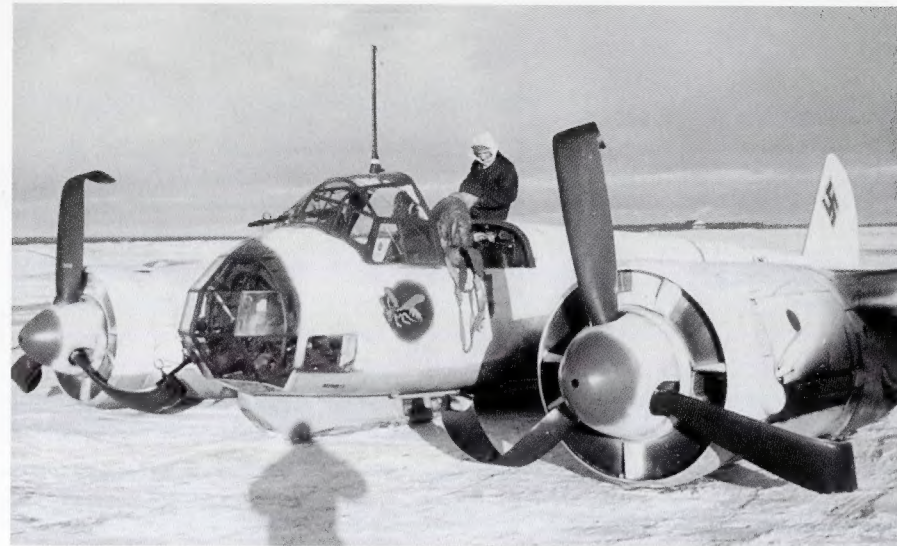
ABOVE, RIGHT AND OPPOSITE: This Ju 88 A-4, F1+AS of 8./KG 76, crash-landed in friendly territory in Northern Russia during the early winter of 1941 probably due to a technical failure. For winter operations, the aircraft has temporary white uppersurfaces painted over the normal black green and dark green European camouflage. The unit code is painted on both sides of the fuselage in black with the individual letter 'A' in red outlined in white. The badge of the Staffel, a black and yellow wasp with silver wings is painted below the cockpit on a red disc. The front half of each spinner is also red.



LEFT: Improved snow banks were used on airfields on the Eastern Front to protect parked aircraft from attacks by Soviet bombers and harassing aircraft. These Ju 88s are fitted with protective tarpaulin covers.



8./KG 76 Emblem



Junkers Ju 88 A-5 of 8./KG 76, December 1941

At this time III./KG 76 was based at Orscha-Süd operating in the harsh Russian winter. Its newly applied temporary white winter camouflage effectively obscured the dark green uppersurfaces, but this would soon begin to wear, becoming very streaky and giving the aircraft a rather bedraggled appearance.

Luftwaffe Bomber Personnel Awarded the *Ritterkreuz* up to the end of December 1941

Ritterkreuz mit Eichenlaub (Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves)



Dietrich Peltz was born on 9 June 1914, joining the German Army in 1934 and transferring to the Luftwaffe two years later. During the early part of the war he commanded a dive bomber Staffel, converting to the Ju 88 after the battle for France. He later led II./KG 77 and I./KG 60 before being appointed Angriffsführer England. He had the distinction of being the youngest ever Luftwaffe General. This photograph shows him as a Generalmajor after having received the Swords to the Ritterkreuz mit Eichenlaub on 23 July 1943 which was presented personally by Adolf Hitler.

No.	Name	Rank	Date	Unit	Notes
20	Baumbach, Werner	Oblt.	14 Jul 41	I./KG 30	Kapitän
46	Peltz, Dietrich	Hptm.	31 Dec 41	II./KG 77	Kommandeur

Ritterkreuz (Knight's Cross)



Werner Baumbach achieved most of his fame with KG 30, commanding first a Staffel in the I. Gruppe and taking over from Hajo Herrmann as Kommandeur of the III. Gruppe in July 1942. He became the 16th person and the first German bomber pilot to be awarded the Ritterkreuz mit Schwertern on 16 August 1942. He later commanded KG 200.

Name	Rank	Date	Unit	Notes (KIA = Killed in action)
Fuchs, Robert	Oberst	6 Apr 40	KG 26	Kommodore
Fiebig, Martin	Oberst	8 May 40	KG 4	Kommodore
Vetter, Martin	Major	16 May 40	II./KG 26	Kommandeur
Baumbach, Werner	Oblt.	1 Jun 40	I./KG 30	Kapitän
Crüger, Arved	Hptm.	19 Jun 40	3./KG 30	Kapitän, KIA 22 Mar 42
Hinkelbein, Claus	Major	19 Jun 40	II./KG 30	Kommandeur
Schulz, Willi	Fw.	19 Jun 40	6./KG 30	
Wieting, Hans	Oblt.	19 Jun 40	6./KG 30	Kapitän, KIA 29 Jun 41
Blowius, Alfred	Oberst	4 Jul 40	LG 1	Kommodore
Fröhlich, Stefan	Oberst	4 Jul 40	KG 76	Kommodore
Stoeckl, Alois	Oberst	4 Jul 40	KG 55	Kommodore, KIA 14 Aug 40
Doench, Fritz	Major	19 Jul 40	I./KG 30	Kommandeur, KIA 14 Jun 42
Lindmayr, Alois	Hptm.	21 Jul 40	7./KG 76	Kapitän
Loebel, Walter	Obstlt.	29 Jul 40	KG 30	Kommodore
Renz, Gerhard	Ofw.	31 Jul 40	I./KG 26	observer
Schwerin, Albert von	Lt.	31 Jul 40	I./KG 26	KIA 19 Nov 40
Eichloff, Otto	Fw.	16 Aug 40	4./KG 30	
Höhne, Otto	Oblt.	5 Sep 40	KG 4	Kapitän
Paepcke, Heinrich	Oblt.	5 Sep 40	7./KG 30	Kapitän

Name	Rank	Date	Unit	Notes (KIA = Killed in action)
Cramer , Heinz	<i>Major</i>	18 Sep 40	II./LG 1	<i>Kommandeur</i>
Kosch , Benno	<i>Obstlt.</i>	1 Oct 40	II./KG 1	<i>Kommandeur</i>
Chamier-Glisczinski , Wolfgang von	<i>Oberst</i>	3 Oct 40	KG 3	<i>Kommodore</i>
Bloedorn , Erich	<i>Major</i>	13 Oct 40	III./KG 4	<i>Kommandeur</i>
Herrmann , Hajo	<i>Oblt.</i>	13 Oct 40	7./KG 30	<i>Kapitän</i>
Kless , Friedrich	<i>Major</i>	14 Oct 40	II./KG 55	<i>Kommandeur</i>
Peltz , Dietrich	<i>Oblt.</i>	14 Oct 40	Stab/KG 77	pilot
Hahn , Joachim	<i>Major</i>	21 Oct 40	KGr 606	<i>Kommandeur</i>
Petersen , Edgar	<i>Major</i>	21 Oct 40	I./KG 40	<i>Kommandeur</i>
Storp , Walter	<i>Hptm.</i>	21 Oct 40	II./KG 76	<i>Kommandeur</i>
Angerstein , Karl	<i>Oberst</i>	2 Nov 40	KG 1	<i>Kommodore</i>
Gravenreuth , Siegfried-Ulrich von	<i>Oblt.</i>	24 Nov 40	I./KG 30	pilot
Kowalewski , Robert	<i>Hptm.</i>	24 Nov 40	II./KG 26	<i>Kommandeur</i>
Richter , Gerhard	<i>Oblt.</i>	24 Nov 40	8./LG 1	<i>Kapitän</i>
Kühl , Hermann	<i>Lt.</i>	25 Nov 40	2./KG 4	KIA 22 Jul 42
Dürbeck , Wilhelm	<i>Hptm.</i>	3 Dec 40	9./LG 1	<i>Kapitän</i> , KIA over Malta
Joep , Bernhard	<i>Oblt.</i>	30 Dec 40	2./KG 40	pilot
Höflinger , Karl	<i>Lt.</i>	19 Jan 41	9./KG 77	KIA 18 Apr 41
Daser , Edmund	<i>Hptm.</i>	21 Feb 41	I./KG 40	<i>Kapitän</i>
Genzow , Joachim	<i>Oblt.</i>	23 Mar 41	4./KG 2	<i>Kapitän</i>
Buckholz , Hans	<i>Oblt.</i>	24 Mar 41	2./KG 40	KIA 19 Mar 41
Fliegel , Fritz	<i>Hptm.</i>	25 Mar 41	I./KG 40	<i>Kommandeur</i>
Kollewe , Gerhard	<i>Hptm.</i>	5 Apr 41	II./LG 1	<i>Kommandeur</i>
Czernik , Gerhard	<i>Oblt.</i>	16 May 41	6./KG 2	<i>Kapitän</i>
Nöske , Klaus	<i>Hptm.</i>	16 May 41	I./KG 4	<i>Kapitän</i>
Helbig , Joachim	<i>Hptm.</i>	18 May 41	4./LG 1	<i>Kapitän</i>
Hoffmann , Kuno	<i>Hptm.</i>	14 Jun 41	I./LG 1	<i>Kommandeur</i>
Heinrichs , Erich	<i>Oblt.</i>	22 Jun 41	II./KG 54	KIA 28 May 41
Brenner , Gerhard	<i>Lt.</i>	5 Jul 41	2./LG 1	
Dous , Willi	<i>Oblt.</i>	5 Jul 41	8./KG 3	
Hunger , Heinrich	<i>Lt.</i>	5 Jul 41	St.St./KG 2	KIA 14 Aug 41
Rieckhoff , Herbert	<i>Oberst</i>	5 Jul 41	KG 2	<i>Kommodore</i>
Sauer , Hans	<i>Lt.</i>	5 Jul 41	4./LG 1	KIA Aug 41
Redlich , Karl-Wolfgang	<i>Oblt.</i>	9 Jul 41	1./KG 27	<i>Kapitän</i> , KIA 29 May 44
Nacke , Rudolf	<i>Stabsfw.</i>	23 Jul 41	III./KG 76	
Thiel , Erich	<i>Oblt.</i>	23 Jul 41	KG 27	<i>Kapitän</i>
Stams , Otto	<i>Hptm.</i>	1 Aug 41	II./KG 1	<i>Kommandeur</i>
Thurner , Hans	<i>Lt.</i>	6 Aug 41	KG 55	
Ihrig , Ernst-Wilhelm	<i>Lt.</i>	14 Aug 41	3./KG 3	KIA 30 Nov 42
Emig , Hans	<i>Obstlt.</i>	21 Aug 41	KGr 806	<i>Kommandeur</i> , KIA 21 Aug 41
Beust , Hans-Henning von	<i>Major</i>	7 Sep 41	III./KG 27	<i>Kommandeur</i>
Bender , Wilhelm	<i>Ofw.</i>	8 Sep 41	5./KG 3	
Hogebach , Hermann	<i>Hptm.</i>	8 Sep 41	III./LG 1	<i>Kommandeur</i>
Bradel , Walter	<i>Hptm.</i>	17 Sep 41	III./KG 2	<i>Kommandeur</i> , KIA 5 May 43
Mons , Rudolf	<i>Oblt.</i>	18 Sep 41	I./KG 40	pilot, KIA 26 Nov 43
Schlosser , Heinrich	<i>Oblt.</i>	18 Sep 41	2./KG 40	<i>Kapitän</i>
Linke , Richard	<i>Major</i>	19 Sep 41	I./KG 54	<i>Kommandeur</i>
Petzold , Ernst	<i>Oblt.</i>	19 Sep 41	5./KG 54	<i>Kapitän</i>
Skorczewski , Wolfgang	<i>Oblt.</i>	27 Sep 41	1./KG 27	<i>Kapitän</i>
Bormann , Ernst	<i>Obstlt.</i>	5 Oct 41	KG 76	<i>Kommodore</i>
Loßberg , Viktor von	<i>Major</i>	17 Oct 41	III./KG 26	<i>Kommandeur</i>
Raithel , Johann	<i>Obstlt.</i>	17 Oct 41	KG 77	<i>Kommodore</i>
Karbe , Adalbert	<i>Oblt.</i>	12 Nov 41	3./KG 55	<i>Kapitän</i> , KIA 30 Jul 42
Klein , Heinz	<i>Oblt.</i>	12 Nov 41	II./KG 27	<i>Kapitän</i>
Stadermann , Waldemar	<i>Lt.</i>	12 Nov 41	6./KG 27	
Beeger , Horst	<i>Oblt.</i>	23 Nov 41	3./LG 1	<i>Kapitän</i>
Wittmann , Herbert	<i>Hptm.</i>	23 Nov 41	KG 53	<i>Kapitän</i>
Marienfeld , Walter	<i>Obstlt.</i>	27 Nov 41	KG 54	<i>Kommodore</i> , KIA 23 Oct 44
Schwegler , Matthais	<i>Oblt.</i>	18 Dec 41	I./KG 51	<i>Kapitän</i> , KIA 18 Apr 45
Bliesener , Fritz	<i>Oblt.</i>	20 Dec 41	5./KG 55	KIA 25 Nov 42
Kiel , Rudolf	<i>Hptm.</i>	20 Dec 41	I./KG 55	<i>Kommandeur</i>
Lukesch , Diether	<i>Lt.</i>	20 Dec 41	7./KG 76	pilot
Steputat , Jürgen	<i>Lt.</i>	20 Dec 41	KG 30	KIA 8 Sep 41

June-December 1941



LEFT: A rare action photograph of a whole Staffel from KG 30 on the way to their target flying through considerable Russian flak.



RIGHT AND BELOW: For operations from short runways and frequently makeshift Russian airfields, rocket assistance was often used for take-off of a heavily-laden bomber. This Ju 88 A-4 of KG 54 has the unit's Totenkopf (Death's Head) badge painted in yellow below the cockpit. The Totenkopf is now often associated with the SS, but it was a familiar and traditional military symbol in Germany long before the rise of the Nazi Party.

